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*Letters to
Women in Love*

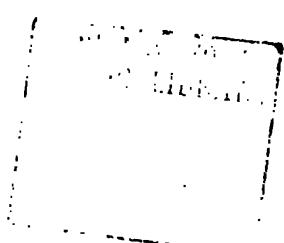
Mrs. John Van Vorst

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*LETTERS TO
WOMEN IN LOVE*

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LETTERS TO WOMEN IN LOVE

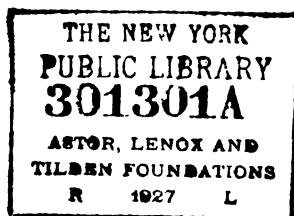
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ROY WOOD
OLIVER
WAGGON

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FOREWORD



MICHAEL MURRAY,
NEW YORK.

FOREWORD

THE thing which counts about a woman, more almost than anything else, from beginning to end, is her age! She spends half her life "not being old enough," and the rest in being "too old." This is, perhaps, because she does not make her aptitudes coincide with her opportunities. I hope, in the case of myself, that my readers will not find me too old for the attempt I am about to make.

Now that my few remaining years compel me to contemplate the distribution of my belongings according to the dull, legal formulas, what I want is to make also a sentimental will, bequeathing to others something of the experiences from which, in life, I have been able to benefit.

This little book thus constitutes the first part of my sentimental testament. My life, through circumstances an isolated one, has been led

Letters to Women in Love

much by correspondence. All sorts of people have written to me about all sorts of things—with no other feeling, perhaps, than that I would answer them! I have kept all their letters, and strange to say, in these times of telegrams and telephones, when letter writing seems an archaic form of communication, I have kept my own answers made to my correspondents.

Having returned now, late in life, to that part of Europe where I was brought up, in the north of Italy, and where, perhaps, my leisure taste for letter writing was first developed, I have enjoyed, not, however, without a touch of melancholy, re-reading these written pages, some of them quite yellow with age.

Many of them have floated upward like phantoms under the ardent flames of an autumn fire. Others are too sacred. . . . I cannot yet open them. Still others have amused me, and this is why I offer them to the public now.

Foreword

It has been truly said that “all the world loves a lover.” These few letters which follow are not love letters, but they treat of love. Love letters, as a matter of fact, are interesting only for the person to whom they are addressed. But letters to people in love—are they not addressed more or less to the world at large? The very oldest woman I ever knew, a Frenchwoman, said once to me:

“No one of us would begin her existence over again, no matter how sorry she might be to leave this world. The truth is, to live and to suffer are the same. But,” and here she drew very close to me, “there is one thing I regret.”

My eyes questioned hers.

“What do you regret?”

And she answered in a whisper: “Love.”

It can’t be denied that if love is the great source of joy it is also a chief cause of suffering. Lovers’ quarrels are proverbial, and have we not Shakespeare’s word for it that the “course of true love never did run smooth”?

There is something much worse in love

Letters to Women in Love

than lovers' quarrels—worse and more serious and dreary—matrimonial disagreements! No sooner have any two people set out as man and wife “to love, honor, and obey,” than they seem beset with difficulties which threaten the harmony of their existence in common.

As I read over all my correspondence to women, my first impulse was to publish everything. Then I began to reflect, to seek out the various causes which apparently act as poison to the happiness of couples whom love has compelled to choose each other as life companion. There were, it appeared to me, a certain number of causes which recurred with a discordant influence: Indifference, ambition, egoism, jealousy.

It was the effect of these influences which I was specially led to study in my correspondence, and I found, as I continued to look over my letters, that there was among them “a case” almost “typical” for each.

I give them for what they are worth, changing, of course, the names of the people who

Foreword

figure in the incidents related, and under whose eyes these pages might fall.

My friend, Jane Cairesbrooke, the wife of Mortimer Cairesbrooke, had arrived, when she began writing to me, at that "center of indifference" in her marriage which is the most dangerous position for a woman. She was exposed naturally to the temptation of putting something into her life less dreary than the humdrum monotony of Mortimer and herself *en tête-à-tête*.

Lily Burnside's case was one of hundreds that are like it. She comes under the category of those whose ambition is a result, transitory and unfortunate, of much that is glorious and necessary in our country. At the time we began to exchange letters her divorce was imminent.

Beatrice Thayer was the typical American girl, adored, adorable, dreading to give up her freedom.

As for Mrs. Aiken, though I never knew her personally, she was the "woman in love"

Letters to Women in Love

most familiar to us all: jealous, and suffering more when there was no reason for her jealousy, than when she discovered a heart-breaking revelation, which seemed to steady her! So given are we women to the spirit of self-sacrifice!

Thus I offer humbly what follows, with the hope that those who no longer find time to write letters, may yet have leisure to read these passing messages.

P A R T I

♥ ♥ ♥

TO MISS BEATRICE THAYER

FIFTH AVENUE

NEW YORK CITY

I

YOU are not very much of a letter writer, I know. I have heard from you not more than a dozen times in the last few years, since you left school. I must attribute the long epistles you used to send me from Farmington to the fact that it was the fashion among the girls in the graduating class to have "lots of correspondents." You were rather flattered, I don't doubt, at my constancy. But you know how fond I was of your dear mother, and that, ever since her death, I have looked upon you as my own child, in a measure. I can't realize that you are twenty-two. For me you will always remain a child. Indifferent you doubtless are to this being "looked upon as a child," but when you grow older it will seem very sweet to you. As we advance in years, those who have "known us when we were little" pass away, start on-

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ward upon the long journey from which they cannot return. Finally we are left with only those about us for whom we have always been responsible grown-ups, and who consider us as contemporaries, or seniors, from whom they have a right to exact certain accomplished standards, failing which we come within scope of their scathing criticism.

Thus it is with tender indulgence and affection that I shall continue to consider you. And you, in turn, though I was fairly young when I began to know you, think of me as having always been old and—I hope I may add—venerable.

In any case I take the liberty of occupying myself about you, quite as though you had turned to me for protection!

Well, then, in the first place—for this is the reason of my present letter—you can imagine my surprise on receiving from Reginald Wells a long, long letter . . . all about you!

You know my especial *penchant* for Reggie. He is one of my boys, one of the old-fashioned

To Miss Beatrice Thayer

sort who still have a little time now and then for their middle-aged friends. Reggie never comes over to see his uncle in Washington without stopping off at Baltimore to lunch or dine and have a good talk with me. He says these little visits "set him to thinking" and "steady him" on a lot of questions. I never remember very much what we have talked about, but I do keep a most charming recollection of his grace and good looks, of his spontaneous frankness, his boyish *naïveté*, his exquisite courtesy, his reverence, and his youth, with all the power that the qualities I name can give to a man. Reggie is twenty-seven, I know, yet I had never thought much about him from a sentimental point of view (except to reflect that all girls must be in love with him, and that he would some day be sure to marry), when all of a sudden came this letter about you, showing that he is deep in a sentimental adventure, and that for him, as for the rest of us, the course of true love does not, and never did, run smooth.

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I can't send you the letter—that would not be quite fair to Reginald, but I must tell you in a measure what he says, and find out from you how you feel on the subject.

Reginald Wells loves you. Of course, this you knew. His affection is not the commonplace attachment of any young man who is attractive, for any young girl who is pretty. He is attractive, and you are pretty—but he really appreciates you. He speaks of you in the most beautiful way—of your character, the power you have for making a man bring out the very best there is in him. He understands you, and he is not surprised that you should care nothing for him. You have so much charm and magnetism that you could win any man you wanted to. You could be the brilliant wife of a prime minister, or something of that sort, he is sure. And so he does not find it astonishing that he should not appeal to you, with his humdrum existence of a man who has very little time, when his work is done, to devote to artistic, literary, and intel-

To Miss Beatrice Thayer

lectual pursuits. These he must foreswear as long as his income, fair as it is, has not placed him among the real "men of leisure."

You have a way, he says, of doing things that no other girl has. You seem to size people up, to put yourself in their places, to know their weaknesses and their hobbies in about five minutes, with the result that anyone who has talked with you half an hour has given out more personality than ever before, and is sure to be moved by your charm.

He would never have gone into business, he protests, seeming to think this may be one reason why you could not be attracted to him —if he had not been the only son to keep up the house which his father established in Wall Street.

Yet, though Reggie continues to affirm that you don't care for him, he suggests in a number of little ways that perhaps you do. He says, for instance, that he doesn't think there's any other man you care for at present. He tells me you have asked him again and again

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to come down with your father to Long Island from Friday to Monday in the summer. And he also adds that he and Mr. Thayer are the best of friends.

But I jump from one thing to another without giving you the details as Reggie gave them to me, and as you are going to answer them in your letter to me.

When he first met you, on his *senior class-day* at Harvard, he knew that he could never care for anybody else. You had come up to Cambridge with the sister and mother of his roommate. As soon as he saw you together, he was jealous, horribly jealous. He imagined that the man who had shared his quarters with him for two years had been hiding a love affair —since he had never mentioned your name—and that he was going to announce his engagement. He didn't announce it, however, and Reggie says that at the beginning you seemed glad to have him so attentive to you; you encouraged him, and he was the happiest man in the world. You let him send you flowers and

To Miss Beatrice Thayer

books. He hadn't the slightest idea you were a flirt—indeed, he doesn't think so now. Only all of a sudden you seemed to change. He couldn't talk with you as he had. You were flippant; you laughed at the things he said seriously, and took seriously the things he meant you to laugh at. He grew constrained, and he could not even make up his mind to ask you whether anything had happened. He tried to believe it was his imagination; that you would, from one day to the other, go back again to your old manner with him. But this you did not do. He began to wonder and doubt that he had ever supposed he could presume to ask you to be his wife!

Not that you were disagreeable to him, on the contrary you were perfectly friendly, and, when he came down to the country, you went about with him more freely than you had. It was simply, he realized, as he analyzed his feelings, that you could never have for him the sort of sentiment he had for you. The time had passed when you used to flush if you

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met him unexpectedly. Gone also the days when, in talking with him of something that touched you, your breathing quickened and your emotion was only too visible. Gone the precious moments when, in a general discussion at table, you used to turn to him with a sudden gesture, as though appealing for protection, and say: "Reggie, what do *you* think? I *know* you agree with me." Gone the strange and subtle influence that existed between you, and which, because it put you in his power and him in yours, was the delicious and cherished proof that you were both falling in love.

Reginald does not want you as a friend, and he cannot bear to lose you! What shall he do? His dream which, like an iridescent bubble, once reflected the world on the lovely colors of its rounded sides, was brusquely reduced to the little dampening spot that astonished us so as children. We used to touch it to see if it really could be the shining ball of a moment before. This is Reginald's attitude. What shall he do?

To Miss Beatrice Thayer

I must answer him, but I don't want to write before hearing from you. You are not a flirt, my child. Don't tell me this, for I shan't believe it.

"You don't want Reggie to suffer, but you can't make him happy." Is that it? If it is, wouldn't it be fairer to have an explanation with him?

You can't be insensible of what he describes. It must be disagreeable for you, too, this sort of constraint that has come into your relations with each other.

You are not surely among the class of girls who delight in being absolute mistress of every situation, and who would rather that others suffer than to feel anything themselves.

You are too young for stoicism. Then what is your attitude?

Above all, don't be provoked with Reggie for writing to me, and don't be vexed with me for telling you of it.

From here I can see your desk—not a bit the sort which is conducive to letter writing.

Letters to Women in Love

There are always pictures and flowers and copies of magazines and kodaks and open boxes of candy and paper-covered novels piled upon it (with strict injunctions to the house-maid "not to touch anything").

Somewhere underneath all these frivolous and half sentimental upper strata there is a silver-cornered blotter, a massive inkstand, and an elaborate pen (rusty, no doubt).

Please, dear, do a little house cleaning. Get down as far as the pen and inkstand, and let me hear from you.

II

I WAS delighted with the rapidity of your answer. And how indicative it was!

I remember one of my friends who had gone abroad with several small children. She one day put an advertisement in the Paris *Herald* for an English nurse. A very grand looking, decayed gentlewoman made her appearance at the hour appointed. The interrogatory proceeded as usual. In the course of the inquisition my friend proffered this question:

“And where were you trained?”

The nurse bounded from her chair.

“Trained?” she cried out. “I’ve always been fond of children, but I’ve never ‘ad hanny trainin’, m’m.”

The fierce indignation with which you respond to my letter establishes a parallel in my mind. You are young, pretty, charming, culti-

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vated. What more natural than that you should be loved, and fall in love yourself? Yet the mere indirect suggestion of such a thing brings an outburst from you.

“Love Reginald? You’ve always been very fond of him, but there’s never been any question of *love*!”

Fortunately your letter doesn’t end here. You do make a few concessions. Fearing, perhaps, that I should send Reginald a special delivery letter to tell him how adamant his pretty friend declares herself, you add a few disparaging remarks about the young man himself, as though in a measure to put on his shoulders the blame for your indifference.

He has never asked you to marry him, in the first place. In the second place, you have never told him that you didn’t like him. In the third place, he must be rather dull not to understand that you couldn’t see as much of him as you do if he were—or ever could be—more to you than a friend. . . .

In other words what you mean is that you

To Miss Beatrice Thayer

are perfectly willing Reginald Wells should be your devoted slave; you are perfectly willing that he should think of you, be with you, dream about you, to the exclusion of all else. In return you deign to see as much of him as you care to without being bored. You would be indignant if he were less attentive to you, or more attentive to some other girl. To speak frankly, your attitude is rather dog-in-the-manger. You care for Reggie just enough not to want anyone else to have him! This promises charmingly for his future happiness!

And, really, I am no better off than I was before. I am half inclined to telegraph Reggie that there is no chance for him, that he is wasting his time, and that he might as well give up all hope, and turn his thoughts aside from the stony-hearted Beatrice!

III

LAST night the maid brought me your telegram. "Don't write R. anything until hearing from me." I spent the evening in agreeable speculation as to how soon I should be able to congratulate Reggie on his engagement. I inwardly blessed you for having come thus rapidly to your senses.

Not at all!

This morning the post brings your letter, and I see you are no further along than when you first wrote.

Reggie had been away for several days, and you waited until you could see him before quite making up your mind as to what you really think. Not that you spoke to him of his confession to me: that would have been disloyal. But you sought while you were with him—I know you—to analyze your feelings now that you are sure he cares for you.

To Miss Beatrice Thayer

This certainty with regard to his sentiments had two distinct effects upon you. You were more self-confident, more indifferent. You had an added sense which came from the assurance of his love, and this same assurance took from the charm of conquest a piquancy it had hitherto possessed. Am I right?

There is nothing more alluring in life than this moment which precedes the declaration of a man . . . I was going to say a man with whom you are falling in love. How you would have resented that if I had said it.

As soon as a man has actually announced his adoration then conscience is called into play and you must take a decision. But during the interim you live in the delicious atmosphere of irresponsibility. You disregard all conventional codes of conduct, you are as fliprant, as reckless, as pathetic, as emotional, as disastrous as you like. Not fearful of consequences, because you know the present situation cannot last; and heedless of opinion, because you know you are adored.

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Well, after Reggie had spent an hour with you, you were willing to make a few concessions. You like him. Of course you like him. You could be happy with him, perhaps, but you don't believe that you would be unhappy without him.

You don't absolutely declare that you will never marry him. If he really loves you he must wait. It won't hurt him to wait, since he seems to think you are worth waiting for.

Finally, as far as I can make out, the sum of your remarks is about this: You hate the idea of an engagement. You can imagine marrying, but you can't imagine being engaged. You won't betroth yourself to Reginald—no, this you will not do. But you would just as soon—for the present, anyway—engage yourself not to marry anyone else.

I am not going to write to Reginald at all. I have nothing to say to him. It is with you that I shall continue my correspondence. Then perhaps Reggie will get his answers second-hand.

IV

YOUR last remark, since it was added, as a sort of postscript, is the one that has remained in my mind. It is perfectly logical if you like, but what can be *falser* than logic? You say:

“If Reginald loves me, he can wait!”

Yes, of course, he *can* wait.

There is a proverb as old as the hills to which, since all time, every nation has given a new form. The idea it expresses remains the same, and it is this: that the wise man does not let his chance escape him once it is within reach.

You know the fable of the haughty crane? It is one of La Fontaine's most ingenious creations. The crane, strutting along the river-side, sees, as he glances into the transparent water, the tench swimming among the rushes. He scorns them, such food is unfit for him.

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The tench disdained, he finds some minnows, and then he gets angry :

“ What? ” he cries, “ I, a crane, to open my mouth for such small fry as that! ”

But in the end he opens it for something much smaller. Hunger seizes him, and he is happy enough to come across a slug.

The story as told by the Arabs is of a horse that passes at full gallop, bareback, his mane floating in the air. The horse’s name is “ Luck.” Instead of catching him as he goes and springing astride of him, the foolish man says :

“ I will wait for a horse that has saddle and bridle.”

He continues his journey on foot, and perishes by thirst on the way.

Instead of consulting the literature of old countries, suppose you were to look no further than America. What would it answer you?

“ Never put off till to-morrow what you can do to-day.” This is the rule which has disci-

To Miss Beatrice Thayer

plined every American who has accomplished anything important or made a name for himself. Our fathers were pioneers, trappers, hunters. The good hunter is the one who fires as soon as he sights his game. If he says: "I'll wait a moment until the bird is in a better position," he will scramble after it and finally lose sight of it altogether.

I don't mean to compare the men we love with birds, nor love with business; but I am sure that on this question, as upon all others, to say "to-morrow will do" is to trifle with destiny.

Have you read these lines of Victor Hugo's in his play called Napoleon II? The poet pictures Napoleon I on the morning his son was born. He says:

"Like an eagle poised upon some height
His cry filled the air, joyous, sublime:
'The future, the future is mine!'"¹

¹Comme un aigle arrivé sur une haute cime
Il cria tout joyeux avec un air sublime :
"L'avenir, l'avenir est à moi!"

Letters to Women in Love

And Hugo, commenting upon this, with words of everlasting wisdom, exclaims:

“No, the future is not yours.
Sire, the future belongs to God.
Each time the hour strikes
It marks a parting here below.
The future! The future! Mystery!
All the things of this world:
Glory, the fortunes of war,
The dazzling diadems of kings,
Victory with glowing wings,
Ambitions all fulfilled
Touch us only
As the bird lights upon our roof in passing.
No, no matter how powerful we are,
Nor whether we laugh nor whether we weep,
We cannot make thee speak,
We cannot, before the time
Unclasp thy frigid palm.
O speechless phantom, our shadow, our guest,
The ever-maskèd spectre who does not leave our
sides
And whom we call: To-morrow.”¹

¹ Non, l'avenir n'est à personne,
Sire, l'avenir est à Dieu.
À chaque fois que l'heure sonne
Tout ici bas nous dit adieu.

To Miss Beatrice Thayer

It is the nature of the American girl to be a conqueror. She looks upon the race of man as a legitimate field for her victories. When one of these men leaves the ranks to take her hand in his and say to her: "Will you link your destiny with mine?" she always feels tempted to say as the other did: "Why must I decide so soon? The future, the future is mine."

No, dear, the future belongs to none of us, it is in God's keeping. As the seasons follow one upon another each adds new pleasure to

L'avenir! L'avenir! Mystère!
Toutes les choses de la terre:
Gloire, fortunes militaires,
Couronne éclatante de roi,
Victoire aux ailes embrasées,
Ne sont jamais sur nous posées
Que comme l'oiseau sur nos toits.
Non, si puissant qu'on soit,
Non, qu'on rie ou qu'on pleure,
Nul ne te fait parler,
Nul ne peut, avant l'heure
Ouvrir ta froide main
O fantôme muet, O notre ombre, O notre hôte,
Spectre toujours masqué, qui nous suit côte à
côte,
Et qu'on nomme : Demain.

Letters to Women in Love

your life, fresh conquests to your conquests—but it carries you more surely toward the winter, toward that time that “marks a parting here below.”

You believe to-morrow will bring you new joys, new chances. You see the horizon blue when you are far from it. Who knows what you will find when you reach it? The setting sun, perhaps, and behind that—the night.

Do it now! Seize the day! These are good, living mottoes. You will find me melancholy? No, on the contrary, I am an optimist, for I believe that, in love as in everything else, it is by welcoming the lesser that we make way for the greater happiness.

Let me hear from you as to what you think. My ideas are perhaps all out of fashion.

V

YOUR effusive epistle in defense of the American girl has reached me. America, you say, has created a new variety of female; the unmarried woman who is not an old maid. Every other country arranges society in such a way that wives alone hold any sway. With us the lion's share, in the distribution of social rights, has been given to girls. America is as proud of her "crop" of young girls each year as she is of her roses, or her harvest of golden wheat.

You can't go to the smallest town in the United States without seeing the portrait of a Miss Somebody in the daily papers. A *débutante*, perhaps a bevy of *débutantes* are described with flowing praise of their beauty, their accomplishments, their sporting talents, their fortunes, and their probable destinies. Between school days and the wedding chimes

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the girl is a subject of everlasting interest to the public. If, taking advantage of her maidenly freedom, she prolong bachelorhood beyond the probable hour of marriage, her acts as a philanthropist, as a woman of the world, as a traveler in foreign lands, as a "representative American" at European courts, still continue to furnish copy for the journalist whose business it is to know what his readers relish most. All this is true, I admit, but I don't see in it, as you do, advantages only.

There is not another land, to be sure, which has its "Gibson Girl." If you run through hastily any one of the Gibson albums you see that the history of American society, sentimental, dramatic, economic, intellectual, is written in the American girl.

How can they resist so much attention? The truth is they don't resist. And here's the rub. Between the ages of twenty and twenty-five they have no other object in life but to "have a good time."

Everybody encourages them in this. It

To Miss Beatrice Thayer

seems as though the whole country rejoiced to think that it possessed a true aristocracy as a reward for the gigantic effort it is sustaining. An aristocracy which enjoys leisure and luxury, which is guided by no other rule than its own pleasure. The aristocrats of the aristocracy are the American girls.

And the toilers of the land are not a bit jealous and envious like some classes that are oppressed. There is not a hard, overworked father in America who doesn't feel keen, secret pride at the "way his girls do things."

And the "girls"—the princesses or queens they might better be called—of this privileged group have the same nonchalant idea as other aristocrats regarding their duties toward society in general. Delightful as the process may be of never doing anything that bores one, and of living to have a good time, there may be certain shortcomings in the results of such conduct.

What are these results?

When the "Gibson Girl" has been "paid

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attention" by lots of men, and for a number of years, it grows very difficult to fix her choice upon any one of her suitors, doesn't it? She has become critical, very naturally. All "beaux" seem to her more or less alike; they have the same good points, the same weaknesses. They don't really understand her ambitions.

Why, then, should she pick out one more than another, when she can dispose of half a dozen? Why should she inflict upon herself the monotonous society of one man when she can be surrounded by a number? Why should she submit to the annoyance of being bound, when she can exercise her caprices as though they were laws, and enjoy her liberty at the same time?

Don't you suppose that our American young men are disconcerted by such procedures? Don't you realize how discouraged they are to feel that the girl they love requires constant amusement, luxury, wealth, diversion, in order to be happy?

To Miss Beatrice Thayer

Perhaps she benefits by all these advantages simply because they are at hand, and because her father provides them for her. Perhaps they are not an indispensable part of her happiness. But how is the poor young man to know this?

In his uncertainty, he hesitates to declare his love. He dreads seeming presumptuous if he supposes that his devotion alone can make up for so much liberty, so much distraction, and the alluring frivolity which any girl would necessarily have to renounce in marrying him.

If he makes a timid advance, the chances are he will not be encouraged. He withdraws then, disheartened, bitter. And who knows? Perhaps two people have missed their opportunity for a real, enduring happiness—two people who were worthy of each other, who might have led useful lives, and who together would have added to the general advancement of the whole country.

Who knows?

Such, however frequent it may be, is not ex-

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actly your case. Reginald Wells, though he works hard, is not hampered by money questions. Since he has confessed his love—to me, if not to you—it would seem as though you had heaven alone to reproach for not giving you wings with which to fly one to the other!

You love Reginald! At least I conclude you do when you announce that you “don’t love anybody else.” You know that he loves you, and yet . . . Yet, you *have* to keep him waiting. Why? Because you don’t care enough for him to make up your mind? No! . . . Because you are a coquette? Oh, no! . . . Because you want to be like the rest of the girls, “in the swim” as it were?

This time I’m not so sure of the answer. Certainly it is not this alone which influences you, and yet—

Let us suppose that I address myself to a girl who is postponing the moment for saying “yes” simply because she fears to appear ridiculous in the eyes of her friends. It is understood that I am thinking of her, not of

To Miss Beatrice Thayer

you, and with her I am quite at ease; so I say:

“ You don’t want to be married before you are twenty-five?

“ Not before I am twenty-eight!”

“ And until then?”

“ I’ll see, there’s plenty of time.”

“ You’ll see what?”

“ I’ll see if I find a man who suits me well enough to give up my liberty for him.”

“ And if you don’t find this man who comes up to your ideals?”

“ I can still have a good time just as I am.”

“ And after that?”

“ I will try to take up something interesting.”

“ Or somebody?”

“ Perhaps. I shall do as the rest do. I’ll go in for philanthropy.”

“ Ah! This is just what I hoped you would say. You fell into my trap delightfully. You recognize that, at a given moment, you will have had enough of yourself, and that, in order

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not to hate life you will have to take up some outside work, a charity. Why do you end there? Why not begin there? Why occupy yourself with a charity when you are already worn out and half through existence? Why not give your attention at once to the 'neighbor' who 'loves you as you love yourself'? Why not do this, dear, while you are young and lovely, with every right to hope, and to be happy?"

What neighbor do I mean? Reginald, of course!

Oh, but I forgot! It wasn't with you, it was with the *other* girl I was talking!

VI

I AM sorry not to see you before you sail.

Not that I would prevent your departure if I could, even though it does mean turning your back upon poor Reggie!

I should like to talk over with you your plans, and enjoy in advance all that you are going to see. But you sail in a week!

I cannot come to New York, you can't come to Baltimore, so we shall have to continue in this way our intercourse. It is perhaps not the worst of ways?

Shall you write to Reggie? Do you want me to write him about you while you are gone? How long shall you stay? And where shall you be? Let me hear from you, if only a line, before you leave.

VII

YOUR note, sent back by the pilot, has just reached me. I can fancy how hastily it was written, after waiting your turn in the little *salon* of the ship already vibrating to the rhythm of the great screws which are propelling you Europeward—away from Reggie.

So you saw him the night before you sailed, and he “almost” proposed? How does a man “almost” propose, I wonder? There are among the friends of every girl I know about a dozen men who have “almost.” . . . I should like some day to question them and have their views on the subject of this semi-achieved proposal. They might have something interesting to say on “Great proposals that never took place and their probable results upon impossible marriages.”

But what touches me even more, is some-

To Miss Beatrice Thayer

thing you tell me of yourself: you "almost" accepted Reggie. He never looked so attractive to you as he did that night in his evening clothes, his eyes were so dark—he really is much the best-looking man you know, and he seemed to care so terribly about your going away. So you "almost" accepted him.

I can't say that my anxiety for Reggie's fate is altogether calmed. No, not that. But I am glad you are going away in this lenient attitude toward my friend.

Women are so impressionable before they really love. It is characteristic of us to consider every incident with the man for whom we are forming an attachment as final. The least little thing he does weighs ponderously for or against him in our hearts. If it is some small neglect we observe, instantly the protest rises to our lips: "He's not the sort of man I could *ever* marry!" If, on the contrary, he has surprised us agreeably, we are pleased at our own good taste which murmurs con-

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tentedly: "*That's* the sort of man I could care for!"

So I am glad, dear, that it was under this impression you separated from Reggie. Traveling for a woman is, as a matter of fact, the most dreary of occupations if she has not some sentimental preoccupation for which to make a setting with all the changing scenes she visits.

If she can say to herself: "He has been here, he has seen this," or, "Perhaps we'll come here some day together," or, "How much more we could see if he were only here"; then the perpetual packing and unpacking, the climbing in and out of omnibuses and trains, the visiting of museums and churches loses its prosaic monotony and becomes the action in an imaginary romance.

It is something in this spirit that I fancy now you will see Europe. You are coming north from Naples through Italy, and then to Paris. Write me only when you reach the French capital. Until then you will be too

To Miss Beatrice Thayer

busy sight-seeing. But in this traveler's activity the heart is wonderfully at leisure.

And who could traverse Italy untouched? I have seen elderly, gray-haired women grow flushed and agitated in listening merely to a gondolier retail some one of the amorous legends of Venice. The love story may have been silent a hundred years, the lovers dead and underground, but its echoes sound like magic; ears grow young again and eyes grow luminous as the picture rises in such admirable surroundings. There is something in the very atmosphere of Italy that stirs the longing to be loved which has no age. In youth we nourish it with hope; in the later years we silence it with memories.

What a pity Reggie could not follow you!
Good-by, dear, until Paris. Address me
always here.

VIII

I HAVE kept my promise and not sent Reggie a line about you since you left. You, of course, have written to him "now and then." It would be too much to expect that you send him really long, good, comforting letters! I can fancy his gratitude for the little foreign post-marked scraps you have deigned to address him. But just the same, haven't you been glad to receive his faithful messages? There were four waiting for you, and a cable, when you reached Paris. They made you "awfully homesick." It seems as though you had been away a year, and you don't even talk of coming back yet. Your father is deep in the old-book question, hunting editions, having bindings copied, and so on. You say there is "nothing especial for you to do." In fact you seem frankly bored!

To Miss Beatrice Thayer

A woman bored in Paris? There is only one thing to account for it. Paris is the best place in the world to be when you're not in love, or when you're with the person you love—but separated from him, I confess, it is *mortel*. The very resources contribute to aggravate your *ennui*.

In America everything is arranged for the woman. Uptown we possess New York. What is there we can't do, and alone? London, on the other hand, is all planned for the man. Even the hansom cab is a masculine invention which entirely overlooks skirts. The shop windows redound with leather articles, toilet articles, colonial articles—and all for men.

But Paris? It is meant for the man and the woman together, and to the exclusion of the rest of the world. For the French, love, sentimental companionship, is not a luxury. Like the red wine they drink it is a necessity for all classes. The French workingman designates his sweetheart as “the one with whom

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I can talk" . . . his comrade, some one he needs in his daily life.

And what is thus openly expressed by the artisan has become, it would seem, the *raison d'être* of Paris. What are the *salons* which have made French society famous? They are nothing more than the reunion of men and women "who can talk" together. The woman's lunch, and the "stag" dinner are unknown in France. Even at the professional banquet which a doctor or a lawyer offers to his colleagues, the women of his family appear to help him receive his guests.

My dear, have we not seen men in France exercise their talents even in the most womanly realms? What, since time immemorial, have been more especially designated as feminine pursuits than cooking and dressmaking? Yet in Paris who are the best cooks? Men, all of them. Who are the best dressmakers? All of them men!

Don't think I am straying away from my subject. You are my subject, and I am con-

To Miss Beatrice Thayer

vinced that the atmosphere of Paris is favorable to my wishes regarding you. Montesquieu said two hundred years ago:

“ When one has been a woman in Paris, one is never satisfied to be a woman anywhere else!” Why? Because the women of France are cherished until they are twenty, courted until they are fifty, and reverenced in their declining years. Thus, to be in Paris without some one to protect you, to make love to you, or to adore you, is enough to make you long for . . . even for Reggie.

IX

YOU can't imagine how I enjoy even the foreign postmark on your letters. I turn them over and study them sometimes, before slipping my paper-knife along the edges of the envelope to take out the transparent sheets of paper, too few alas! and written over on one side only. Fortunately I can read between the lines, and I know Paris so well.

What is more delicious than the spring season there! I shan't allow myself to go into ecstacies over the sunlight, the flowers, the river, the Bois, the perfume of the wet pavements, and the lighting of the Champs Elysées when night descends. . . . These you have before you, and my effusions, however heartfelt, would fall short of reality.

As a rule we Americans have the feeling of: "Oh, how wonderful Paris would be if it were not for the French!" But you seem to

To Miss Beatrice Thayer

be an exception to this rule. You are full of enthusiasm over the manner in which French people "do things." Even the way the poor women dress their hair is a lesson to the New Englander who has too long looked upon the "crowning glory" as a nest of vipers.

In Spain you know they go so far as to contract with each young girl engaged to sell in the shops that she shall have her hair arranged by a *hairdresser* once a week.

This matter of hair, which seems so insignificant, is really most important from a psychological point of view in the study of nations and of individuals. The sentimental temperament of a whole country is indicated by the way the women's hair grows; for example:

Germany: formal and heavy.

Italy: supple and rebellious.

Switzerland: stiff and uncompromising.

France: varied and made much of.

Sweden: lank and colorless.

America: hygienic and unkempt.

England: with too much or too little vitality.

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Yes, the hair is a great indication even of the personal disposition. People are like their hair, pliant, refractory, submissive, inflexible, etc. And, indeed, I have sometimes carried my observations still further, and noticed that a woman's hair is the barometer of her temper. If husbands only had, as we have, the gift for "biding their time," they would know it is best not to ask a favor on the day when their wives' hair escapes in rigid wisps all over their heads. There is a moment, on the contrary, which is extremely propitious, between the hour when we can "do nothing with our hair" and the hour when it "needs washing." There is something—is it the weather, the temperature, the moon—which makes our moods register in the elasticity of our hair?

But, dear, you will think I have gone mad to dissent thus when I might be talking of better things.

As a matter of fact what I see is that you have become captivated by Paris—and the French. Your expeditions to Chantilly and to

To Miss Beatrice Thayer

Versailles, where you live over the annals of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, your flights into a more distant past which you survey cursorily over the "pneus" of an automobile flying through Touraine, your dinners at Armentonville (where, by the way, you hear nothing but English spoken), your lunches at the Château de Madrid where Louis XV used to sup with the Duchesse de Pompadour and Mademoiselle de Châteauroult. . . . I am with you, dear. Even in your more prosaic visits to the great dressmakers in the Rue de la Paix I am not far from you. I follow your mental reflections as you choose your gowns. Since you have seen how simply the French girl dresses, how satisfied she is with little before her marriage, and how this marriage appears to her as the only destiny for a woman, you have come nearer than ever before to regretting that you were not Madame—no, not Madame, *Mrs.*—how I wish I could add Wells—Mrs. Reginald Wells!

But this I don't, for the moment, presage.

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On the contrary it would seem as though there were something in the atmosphere of Paris which was separating you, in thought at least, and only temporarily I hope, from America and American ways, from the informality and *sans gêne* of our people, from us, from me—from Reggie.

Am I right? You are American to the very marrow of your bones, dear. You could not be happy in a country which, however you might admire its traditions and be attracted by its culture, must forever remain to you a foreign country, that is strange, alien, different, “queer.”

X

IHAVE your short note telling me that Reggie has arrived in Paris! He did not come to see me, nor even write me, before sailing. He was afraid that I would dissuade him from such a definitive move. Now it is done I make no comment. I shall wait until hearing more in detail from you before expressing my opinion one way or the other.

Perhaps Reggie has done the wisest thing in the world—perhaps the most foolish. In a courtship the same act may appear glorious or ignoble, depending entirely upon how the woman courted takes it.

XI

YOUR second letter has come, and I see that poor Reggie has made a dreadful mistake!

In Italy, after an anonymous sort of fashion, you longed for somebody, for a "beau," some one to make love to you, some one to complete with a personal romance the wonderfully picturesque setting which surrounded you.

In Paris you felt first that it was a natural desire, then that it was a conventional necessity, to be married. It was this transition from the natural to the conventional wherein poor Reggie's chances perished.

But have they quite perished? Is it as hopeless for him as you think? All of a sudden you have adopted the Latin idea of a woman submissive to man, a man who is lord and master, and who asks neither advice nor criticism, but approval only. Which approval,

To Miss Beatrice Thayer

if his wife, mother, sister, sweetheart fail to give, he finds elsewhere. Why this change? Could Reggie be prepared for it?

You say that he seems like a girl, he doesn't know how to order people around, he hesitates about an hour, it seems to you, over the menu when it is handed to him in a restaurant, and finally he gives it to you, as though you could arrange the dinner for his guests. With the wines it is even worse. Reggie drinks nothing himself, and what French *maître d'hôtel* could respect a gentleman who doesn't take a glass of wine with his meals?

Small things, all of them, but very irritating.

And what you hate, too, is to see Reggie so badly served and so cheated! Not speaking French, he never discusses the price of anything. He simply holds out his handful of coin and lets the menials fall upon it. Then occasionally there is an awful revulsion, in his 'American mind, against this grandiose system, and you catch sight of him, when you

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have regained the carriage, lingering in some unpleasant dispute.

When you go with him anywhere out of town, Saint Cloud or Ville d'Avray, it is you, because you speak French, who must take the initiative of buying the tickets, finding out about boats and trains. This is contrary to what you have been accustomed to in America, and with your father; it enrages you.

Reggie insists upon wearing a straw hat, and there isn't a self-respecting Frenchman of the world who would think of wearing a straw hat in Paris before the Grand Prix has been run. This, too, is only a detail. But for a woman, the great passion which we call love is nothing more than a collection of details—a series of small, trifling things which, appealing to our taste, seducing it, meeting with our sentimental approval, determine the attraction love is.

Dear child, don't be hard on Reggie. Don't let outside influences affect too much the true course of your feelings. Don't let your

To Miss Beatrice Thayer

inclination for Reggie be thus, by some superficial thing, transformed into a positive revulsion. Don't feel that you are responsible for Reggie just because he cares for you. Be more simple!

At your age things decide themselves. You need take no heartrending decisions. As a woman grows older and her chances of happiness diminish, there is something irrevocable in whatever she determines to do. It is as though time had put a mortgage upon every act she attempts.

While youth is still yours, let there be something lovely in the spontaneity of your choice! Don't be hampered, Beatrice, by worldly considerations. If you love Reggie ever so little, let him see it. This confidence, if you place it in him, will act as magic upon his powers to please you. No, you say? You like him better when he is melancholy and hopeless than when he is exuberant and reassured?

Ah, Beatrice! The truth is Reggie loves you too well. You are too sure of him. A

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woman who is loved in this way is always ready to say *no* until. . . . Until what? Until she is no longer loved. Take my word for it. Reggie loves you too much. It won't last. *Carpe diem!*

As a matter of fact, which are the women who believe themselves to have been adored?

1. Those who have lost a husband whom they treated abominably during his lifetime.

2. Those who have remained old maids after jilting a fiancé.

The other wives and daughters always doubt!

Seize the day, dear. If you don't realize your hopes now, you will have no memories later. If you have no hopes now, then what will become of you? Do you wish to be that saddest of all things—a faded bud? A bud whose outside leaves, before ever unfolding, have withered in their contact with the world.

Write me that you have promised Reggie "he can hope."

XII

INDIGNANT, enraged, discouraged, petulant, thus you appear in your last letter.

And why? Simply because Reggie has—proposed to you! What a terrible offense indeed. With our highly cultivated sensibilities, we women cannot understand how any man is able to propose when things are so against him that he is sure to be rejected.

So you have refused Reggie? Poor Reginald Wells! And you are not even sorry for him. It was his own fault. He chose the most unpropitious moment: when you were alone together up in the towers of Notre Dame with Paris stretching immense, vague, anonymous before you, and all the past stirring in your veins, and Reggie seeming so pale, so personal, so insignificant by comparison with what was in your thoughts.

You wanted to run away from him, and you

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couldn't. You wanted to hide under the uplifted wings of the little angel of Notre Dame, and beg her to protect you. Ah, Beatrice! As you turned toward the frail and exquisite little statue, whose delicate wings, immobile through the ages, have typified that unchanging purity toward which man lifts his eyes as to the supreme ideal, thus Reggie turned to you. His feelings, like yours, were arduous, reverent, seeking protection against the world for what was the best in him.

He "froze you." These are the words you use—expressive at least. You felt that you didn't care whether you ever saw him again. After you had said "No," you came all the way down the winding staircase into the church below without speaking again. The carriage was waiting for you near the bridge, you got into it. Reggie asked if he might come after dinner to the hotel, and you answered that there would be nobody there; you and your father were dining out. Since then you have not seen him.

To Miss Beatrice Thayer

It is the last sentence of your letter which gives me a glimmer of hope. You exclaim:

“After what had happened I should think Reggie would at least have sent me some flowers, or written me a line.”

But he didn’t. You have been left to meditate upon your own iciness.

Perhaps, if it were to be lived over again, this expedition to Notre Dame, it might be subjected to certain changes on the part of the proud American girl?

Another favorable sign is that you have not once thought of Reggie. If you were “sorry for him,” if you felt “like a sister” to him, I should be more anxious. Your charming egoism on this occasion shows, as a matter of fact, how absorbed you are in the affair.

Well, well, dear, be sincere, this is all I ask of you. Most sentimental failures are due to a lack of genuineness. Be true to yourself and you will be true to Reggie. It is never too late to mend, and no one incident is final in love, or in life.

XIII

ICAN'T say that I am really surprised at what you tell me! What did you expect Reggie to do? You refused him point blank, when he asked if he might see you again; you insisted that it was impossible. The next day you received a note from Reggie, written on his way to Calais. He took the first boat he could from Queenstown, and you are almost as overwhelmed at this as you were "frozen," some time ago, by his proposing to you.

Ah, Beatrice, what an exaggerated influence "outside" things have upon you! Why, dear, do you not look in your heart, and act, instead of acting first according to some obscure and stupid convention, only to consider, when it is too late, the dictates of your innermost inclinations.

To Miss Beatrice Thayer

I don't pity you in the least, you have got exactly what you deserve. I shall probably see Reggie as soon as he gets back. I confess my sympathies are all on his side.

XIV

YOU seem perfectly amazed that Reggie should not have written to you since landing in America. Why should he write to you? This question hasn't presented itself to your mind. A woman can never understand why any man who has ever loved her should not continue to do so until the end of his days. I don't mean by this that Reggie has stopped loving you. Alas, no; quite the contrary. You beg me for news of him, so I give it to you, outspoken. Reggie looks wretchedly ill. He is working day and night, against the orders of the doctor, who says that he should go to the seashore and "loaf" for a month at least.

He had not been a week in New York before he came over to pay me a flying visit, between trains, under pretext of being

To Miss Beatrice Thayer

“rushed” with business. Of course the first thing he spoke about was you, without naming you, however. He began with a sort of apologetic accent:

“It’s all over. She doesn’t care a hang about me. I’m not surprised. I don’t see how I could have expected she would. It was horribly vain of me. I thought I could make her so happy.”

Here Reggie stopped. His handsome head was bowed, his elbows rested on his knees, and his hat swung between them, balanced on the ends of his fingers as though he took some interest in the manipulations of this straw head-covering. Presently he looked up, and seeing that I was watching him tenderly and with eagerness, he went on:

“She can’t have any idea how I care for her. Everything I said was perfectly stupid that day at *Notre Dame*. I’d give anything to have that day over.”

“Perhaps she would, too,” I ventured.

“Oh, no,” Reggie protested, “you didn’t

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see her. She was just like ice. She'd liked to have put me a thousand miles away if she could have. . . . ”

“ Faint heart . . . ” I murmured.

“ I'm not faint-hearted,” he answered. “ I followed her over to Paris. I'd have gone to the ends of the earth to please her. But she was just as untouched that day as though she'd no idea what I was driving at. I froze her,” he added . . . , “ and I adore her, I adore the very ground she walks on. What is to become of me? ”

“ Reggie,” I said, “ don't take it so to heart.”

“ To heart? Why, it's my very fiber. You don't suppose it's a passing fancy, do you, any light matter? For two years she's been all I've thought about. Everything else was a side issue. To heart? ” he repeated. “ What do you mean? ”

I attempted to explain, but he interrupted me.

“ Oh, I'm not going to kill myself, if that's

To Miss Beatrice Thayer

what you call taking it seriously. My mind is steady. I'm not a complete coward."

"Why, Reggie," I said, "the happiest marriages I know are those where the woman began by refusing the man, and ended by proposing to him herself!"

Reggie smiled, and I saw in this relaxation of his features how wan his expression had become.

"No," he said, "she knows what she wants, and the best thing for me is to keep out of her way. I can't let my misery seem like a reproach to anyone."

We didn't speak of you again after this last remark of Reggie's. I felt too uncertain of you to proffer any encouragement. I felt, dear, that you were a victim almost as much as he, and far different. His suffering came from you, and yours came from the flippant education which had led you to consider everything in life from the standpoint—not of what it was worth—but of whether you wanted it or not. This is fatal to happiness. When it

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seemed that you could no longer have Reggie, his true value first occurred to you. You had to miss him, to want him, and to think you had lost him before his real worth became apparent to you.

Is it too late? That remains to be seen. All depends on your own way of acting now. Men best know what they want; women know best how to describe their wants. Pride alone can now interfere with your future joy.

XV

REGGIE has told me the good news of your letter to him. You are on the ocean now. You were right to persuade Mr. Thayer to bring you back. I can fancy your feelings. Reggie seems distressed in the midst of his gladness to hear from you. He doubts still what reason brings you homeward so unexpectedly. He fears that you may long simply, as a child, to play again with fire!

I send this to your New York address, your ship ought to get in to-day. Let me hear from you as soon as possible after arriving. Is it to be or not to be?

P. S.—Reggie's telegram has this moment arrived. Heartiest congratulations to you both. Don't make a too long engagement! I am sure your father must be in a hurry to

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have such a son-in-law as Reginald Wells. Write soon, and remember that I love you both as much in your foolish happiness as I did in your foolish misery!

P A R T I I

♡ ♡ ♡

TO MRS. ELIZABETH AIKEN

UXEDO

NEW YORK



I

I WAS glad to receive your letter and that you wrote directly without waiting for a further presentation than the recommendation given you by Jane Cairesbrooke, through her friendship for me and her kindly confidence in my capacity to help you in your present perplexities. If I had seen you, who knows, I might have been less well able to "prescribe" for you? As it is, there may arise between us a subtle understanding, flattened by the imagination which, like distance, lends enchantment!

Certain questions, however, I must put, and you must be good enough to answer them as you would those of a doctor whom you want to have diagnose your sufferings. Sincere you will be, of that I am sure, since you have already written to me in this spontaneous man-

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ner, telling me that you are unhappy—unhappy because you are jealous.

Some clever person has observed that there are two things which a woman resents, no matter what her age: one that you should suspect she has never been in love, and the other, that you should suppose she *is* in love.

Her resentment might more justly be roused were you to accuse her of being jealous—a prey to jealousy! This, without waiting to divine it, you have confessed, so I have hopes for the frankness with which you will respond to my catechism.

From Jane, of course, I know something of your life, and the peculiar circumstances under which you were brought up. She has told me that you were adopted when you were a small child by Mrs. Winthrope, a second wife of your own uncle. This Mrs. Winthrope, who is in reality no relation to you, has an only son by her first marriage. This son, Nicolas Wainright by name, naturally grew up in the same house and under the same influences with

To Mrs. Elizabeth Aiken

you, and from what Jane has given me to understand he has been always like a brother to you. That you married very young, and that you have been many years a widow I have heard also through our mutual friend. This is only a smattering of what I must be told. So now prepare for my questions!

First of all—and this *entre nous* of course—how old are you? When I know this I shall have my surest clew in guiding you to successfully combat the “green-eyed monster.”

If you are jealous must you, does it go without saying, be in love? There are those who pretend that the two sentiments are inseparables, and that anyone who ignores this peculiar, unreasoning master of our reason cannot imagine what love is. Such is not my opinion. Men have their own particular way of being jealous—but of this, as the subject merits deliberate treatment, I will ask you to let me speak in another letter. In a general way, without going into details, it is safe to affirm that love alone arouses jealousy in the mascu-

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line mind. With women it is not so. We, alas, often continue all the symptoms, the trying, tormenting symptoms of the disease when the malady itself is cured. To be more explicit: a woman may go on being jealous when her love has turned to hatred. I do not take this to be your case?

The matter of age, upon which I insist in a way that may seem to you indiscreet, is important for this reason, that it determines what course of action one should pursue toward the object of one's passion. To make a rule—rather sweeping perhaps, as all rules are—if you are twenty, twenty-five, possibly twenty-six, there is but one thing for you to do: render jealous the man of whom you are jealous yourself. This is youth's privilege, to assert its charm. Claim a certain attention from those about whom you care nothing, in order that the value of your merits may appear clearly to him for whom you care all. Let him not fall into any habit of thought concerning you, for habit means inattention, and in-

To Mrs. Elizabeth Aiken

attention, sooner or later, results in indifference.

From twenty to twenty-five, each episode in a *vie à deux* is a promise for the future. It appears as a light or as a shadow which will illumine or plunge into obscurity the coming years. If youth is yours, have patience, all will follow as you want it.

Now, on the other hand, if you have doubled your twenties and entered the "serious" age, you must learn to be indulgent. The power of these later years lies in their accumulated memories. And the bond which holds the man you love to this common past is your present tenderness. Be brusque, and you shatter the mirror which reflected your image side by side with his. Be loving, forgetful, recall only what you would have him recall, and, as though a veil were lifted, you see clearly that which for a moment may have threatened to fade from sight.

Jealousy is the worst counselor a woman can have. You must have observed, as I have,

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that there is no sentiment about which a woman is so conscientious. Have you not seen more than one wife, by a protracted and persistent course of suspicion, provoke the very crises she dreaded?

Confidence is the only nourishment upon which love can really thrive. There is, however, just a shade of difference in the way which this indispensable trust should be applied. Therefore I beg you to tell me how old you are. Perhaps you shall have no need of my advice when you have heard the trite form to which it can be reduced. In a word then, this is it:

If you are twenty, have confidence in yourself. If you are forty, have confidence in the man you love.

“But,” you exclaim, “there are all the intervening ages!”

Let us not go further until I have received your answer to my first question. In writing I must ask you also to tell me more about yourself and about the man you love. Tell me how

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he occupies himself and what you do with your leisure; for it is a man's duties and a woman's pleasures which most surely indicate their characters.

Are you rich, are you poor? Have you children? Do you live alone. None of these things are to be divined from your confession; for alas, both love and jealousy can and do exist in women of all degrees. I shall eagerly await your reply.

II

YOUR letter has come and I see that you respond to my question as though I really were a doctor endeavoring to diagnose your case. Among the answers you give there are some which please me. Others I find unfavorable to our cause. If I place the pros and cons in the delicate scales of foresight, where each weight has the value we choose to give it, I conclude that my patient will recover from the ill which makes her suffer. But! On one condition only: that we both face bravely the adverse circumstances with which we have to contend, that we consent to see things as they are, and not as they should be.

I suppose, when you wrote me, for example, that you had a fortune, modest but quite sufficient for all your needs, you believed yourself uncommonly lucky. My experience is of

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longer duration than yours, and I am of the contrary opinion. The worse menace to a woman in your state of mind is isolation. Self-analysis, introspection, the possibility of remaining hours alone, here lies the danger for you. People who are really poor cannot indulge in self-pity. They are too busy with the practical details of earning a living. They have to calculate and economize and make all sorts of combinations, which take them out of themselves and force them to bow under the tyranny of exterior circumstances. An enormous fortune is a chain of another sort. It makes you the slave of those who are as rich as you, and who insist that you participate with them in dissipations and pleasures more or less shallow. Great wealth, like a great name, imposes upon you certain obligations, and an outward show which poisons existence.

You can imagine from all this that I am sorry you are not either richer or poorer, and that I regret especially your living alone. However regular your habits may be, you are

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obliged to consider no one but yourself. If you are tempted at times to indulge in lonely meditations which can only nourish and foster your suffering, there is nothing to keep you from it. You are like a bachelor who ought not to smoke, and who, as soon as he is alone, shuts himself up in his den to enjoy a good cigar.

The man you love, this Nicolas Wainright with whom you have been brought up—as a sister, the world supposes, little initiated—this man is a doctor. Here we go from bad to worse.

Business men's wives, you will protest, can't see anything of their husbands during the day! No, I grant you that. But if it occurred to a broker's wife that she would like to see her husband in his office, she is free to call upon him there. She can interrupt him at least long enough to say :

“I have come to recommend the greatest affair yet known. Please stop work a moment and listen to *love!*”

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What can a woman do who cares for a doctor? Whether she be his wife, his "sister," or his friend, there are several hours a day when she is debarred from seeing him. She must pause on the threshold of his study, where the "secrets of the profession" hold her as though they were so many interposing iron bars. And with whom may the doctor be closeted behind these bars? Not with a stock-broker to discuss the fluctuations of the market. No, with a woman probably, who, as like as not, is young and good-looking. She is pouring out her heart to him, placing herself at his mercy!

Even when you are alone with the doctor a ring at the bell, a call at the telephone, may interrupt your *tête-à-tête*. Illness has claims upon him equal to those of love. A doctor is at the service above all of those who suffer. They may send for him at any hour of the day or night.

Now the door scarcely closes behind him when the old jealousy returns. You torture yourself with such reflections as this:

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“ He pretends that he has gone to treat a patient. He is tired of me already—this is worse than any sickness. . . . ”

Finally, in our list of unfortunate facts, there is that of your age which, alas, no power can alter. You are thirty-eight. A wonderful time no doubt for a woman. The rose is never as sweet nor as brilliant as when it is full blown. Provided that wind and rain deal gently, and leave it thus blooming for a few days at the most, we feel with sadness as we look at it, that to-morrow it must fade. Its petals, unfurled, will fall one by one to the earth, leaving it reft of beauty. Thus melancholy steals into the hours that should be only joyful, as the shadows forecast the night; while the sun is yet high. Melancholy has no color of its own. It takes form and light from our ruling passions. If your ruling passion is jealousy, melancholy will whet it as the pedal magnifies the sound of the piano.

The reasons why a jealous woman should, as the years advance, dread losing her in-

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fluence over the man she loves, are too apparent. I shall not dwell upon them. Enough indeed has been said about that side of the balance which gives us cause for anxiety. Let us now have a glance at the reassuring evidence.

In the first place, I am delighted that you are so feminine. You don't care a bit about reforming humanity! You are much more preoccupied over the exquisiteness of your own home. You wish everything to be perfect in your house and housekeeping, and you are quite right. There is no surer way of fixing the tenderness of a man than by letting him feel that you want to make the place where you receive him a sanctuary of this tenderness. This is apparent in multiple details; the way the flowers are arranged in a vase he has given you, the way his favorite dishes are prepared for him at table, the atmosphere of welcome and cheerfulness about the whole surroundings, the hearth ever festive and the hostess no less *en fête*.

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You are right in giving your personal attention to your clothes. Money alone is not enough to give. Men don't know anything about "shirring" and "gathering" and "bias folds," but they are as quick as a flash to distinguish and appreciate the little touch you have added with your own hand to a dressmaker's creation.

One of the great secrets of happiness for a woman is this power to enjoy what gives pleasure to the man.

Since circumstances do not permit you to marry the man you love (for you tell me that so long as Mrs. Winthrope lives there is no chance of your becoming the wife of Nicolas Wainright) I am not sorry that you had no children by your first marriage. The children of a father who no longer holds the first place in their mother's heart are a source of anxiety and annoyance. They oblige a woman to lead two distinct lives; one as a mother, and one as an *amoureuse*. A contradiction arises in her state of mind, and she ends by being un-

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able to devote herself wholly to either of the rôles.

The maternal instinct is not lacking in you. You tell me you have a menagerie of dogs and birds and animals of all sorts! The dependence of these creatures upon you is a comfort in your existence. You like to feel that they need you. This longing to be indispensable is one of woman's charms. It is one of the forces of her love.

I say one of the forces. The greatest is—love itself. Isn't it? I must say I am very glad you love this man of whom you are jealous. I shouldn't be interested in you if you didn't, and it is not half as common an occurrence as you think. You know, since you have gone into it, what an obsession jealousy is, the care it demands from you, the discipline it imposes once you have fallen into its clutches. It doesn't leave you peaceful an instant. You are like a slave who is called upon incessantly by a capricious mistress. Anyone would suppose that you must be desperately attached to

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the man on whose account you let yourself be thus tried. Not at all! If we could balance up the accounts of the jealous women who poison their own lives and the lives of the men they once loved, I wager we would find that, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, they *hate* the man who is the object of such minute attention on their part! If he were to reform they wouldn't forgive him. But—and here is the strange thing—though he may bore them too much for them to want to make him happy, they are never too bored to test their powers at making him miserable! For such jealousy as this there is no remedy.

You fortunately are jealous because you love. If you give up to your suspicions without possessing any proofs, it must be that you are terribly afraid of losing Nicolas Wainright. He must be absolutely necessary to your happiness. "You can't live without him," etc. This is a power in itself but, dear, what bad use you are making of it! The true love of a man and a woman for each other is too

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rare and precious a thing to be destroyed. If its safety is threatened by the overweening pride of one or of the other, this pride should in the end harness itself submissively to love's triumphal chariot. You will say that I am becoming poetical. The subject is perhaps conducive, but I hope you will find some grains of common sense scattered in among my flowery phrases!

III

I HAVE just read your note, or rather bulletin, received this morning. I am glad you agree with me in recognizing the ingenuity of jealousy. As far as I can judge, however, your state of mind is no more calm than it was before. Yet from the medical point of view, I can't see that you have been "exposed" to the "attack" which you seem to fear.

You have no real ground for jealousy. You have suspicions. You have no proof. If it were not for these suspicions, you tell me, you would be blissful. Alas, this only confirms my opinion that it is very hard for a woman not to be miserable, even when she is happy! Which anomaly has its cause in the very way women love.

Puzzled by certain cases which came up be-
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fore him, Judge Parry, I remember, asked me one day:

“Why is it that a woman can’t forgive a man for drinking when she would forgive the same man for committing a theft?”

I answered that I supposed it was because the man who has stolen or dishonored his name is in dire need of his wife to sustain him. And so I believe it to be. A woman will remain more attached to a thief who has need of her than to a genius who can get along without her!

I don’t mean by this that we would go quite so far as to wish our husbands were thieves! . . . All I want to indicate is the danger of loving in too maternal a way. It is only during the brief period when the child lies within his mother’s arms that he has absolute dependence on her. For that short space she is between him and the world, without a rival. But from the day when this son goes forth to make his way, as she would have him, her part is to share him with his destiny. She watches

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in him, with a touch of melancholy, the very strength of which she is most proud. She remembers the days when it was his helplessness that riveted her to him.

There is something of this recollection, something of this melancholy in the feelings of every woman for the man she loves. Yet if we will but recognize it, there are always ways, dear, in which a man is helpless enough to employ all our tenderness. The truth is we want a man to need us in our way, not in his own; and this is the great menace to happiness.

When a man is falling in love he abdicates momentarily his egoism. The expression "a man is paying attention to a woman" exactly describes his psychological condition. Literally he *is* paying attention to her tastes, her likes and dislikes, to his own manner of pleasing her, to the anticipation of the least desire on her part, and the suppression of anything in himself—even his favorite hobby—which may disgust her. This makes of him a most

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charming companion! It would be quite enough to explain why some girls postpone the hour of marrying while so many men are "paying attention" to them. They are perfectly happy.

Once the honeymoon is over, the man begins to "pay attention" to himself, and to his work, if he has any. This is horribly irritating. The most natural thing is to say: "He doesn't love me as he used to." Perhaps he doesn't in just the same way—in your way. But what, after all, would be the outcome of "your way"?

The fact that you and Dr. Wainright must prolong your courtship because circumstances make it impossible for you to marry, renders the conditions of this courtship different from the ordinary. You would not have him give up his career? You love him for what he is, and does, don't you? Yet there is in you an obscure jealousy of his occupation, which takes him from you. You love him for the very thing that makes you unhappy. What

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does this contradiction mean? We must analyze it, but not to-day.

Write to me a frank criticism of your own character as though it were that of some one else. You must have a fairly just notion of yourself; you are introspective naturally, and, living alone, you have had plenty of opportunity to study the ego of Mrs. Elizabeth Aiken. Take any three incidents or occurrences in which you think you have shown, under different aspects, your character. Then I shall be able to go on with my diagnosis and to tell you in medico-philosophical form whether your mind, your heart, or your will power be the source of your suffering.

IV

YOURS received yesterday. Accept my congratulations on the clever way you have shown the limits of your soul as a search light scans the horizon. You are timid and violent, modest and vain. Your lack of confidence brings about the injustices which enrage you. Your penetration enables you to see more clearly than others your faults and your qualities, so that both praise and criticism you are apt to resent. Praise because you don't think you deserve it, and criticism because you are sure you don't merit it.

Given your own diagram it is not difficult to "locate" your malady. It lies in the realm of the feelings (you know that philosophers have relegated human attributes to the three realms of feeling, intelligence, and will). We find very rarely an altogether balanced person.

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The headlong type, who feels before he thinks, is familiar to us; the scholar, whose feelings are atrophied, is his opposite; and midway between the poet and the scientist are all the varieties of persons actuated in life by too much or too little will power.

There is the man who graduates head of his class by sheer perseverance, and who is never heard of again once he has left college. At the other extreme there is the will-less hybrid known as a neurasthenic!

You don't take your place in any exaggerated category, but, like many of us women, you give an all-important precedence to your feelings. Jealousy is a feeling with you since it is founded on suspicion (another feeling) and not on facts. You say to yourself:

“When I reason the thing out, I know there is no reason to be jealous, but my feelings get the better of me.”

Why is it that a woman always doubts of a man's love until he stops loving her? Probably because her “feelings always get the bet-

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ter of her." The day a shock brings her to her senses, she says:

"Of course he loved me. If I had only realized it."

This power of employing our intelligence at all times, if we wish to do so, is a privilege we have over the animals. It seems a pity not to make use of it while there is yet time to be happy! Some wise person has said: "Don't have any feelings that can be hurt." You might interpret this as a recommendation to let your heart become as a stone. Not at all! What it means is that your intelligence should stand side by side with your sensibilities and that one should control and the other soften; one should give form and the other life to every thought you have. Life without form or law is anarchy, and form without life is sterility, in thought as in action.

But to return to your hurt feelings. Nothing is more disheartening and irritating than the sniffling, sensitive woman. You can hear her husband roaring at her: "Didn't you

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know I didn't mean it?" She confesses she knew he didn't, but she goes on crying! She is unbalanced.

Men go to the other extreme. Their intelligence and will power are generally more developed than their sensibilities, so that half the time they don't even know what it is which they have done that has given offense. Confess, yourself, that a good number of the little things which have caused you suffering on Dr. Wainright's part, he would not dream could have hurt you?

What are you to do about it? Stop feeling? No, not that. But stop feeling what you know isn't true. Think first. Reason. Then feel accordingly. And never relapse, like the woman who adds through her tears of reconciliation: "Of course, I knew you didn't mean it, but I couldn't help crying naturally." Yes, you could help crying if you had given place to your common sense instead of to your unreasoning sensitiveness. Try the experiment. It is all the difference between being a

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master or a slave. If you let your feelings take the lead, you will stray into sloughs of despond; to be content you must let them, as in a regal retinue, follow the march of the mind, which, like the king, goes before to make clear the way.

It is not so easy, you say. It would not be if we had not at our disposal the third auxiliary, the will. By an effort of your will you can bring about the tranquility necessary to happiness in your relations with Nicolas Wainright. You know he loves you better than anyone in the world. Then, by your will, make yourself believe it, and act as though you thought it were true.

Have you told me all? I feel that behind your self-analysis there is something unspoken. There is a poison eating down into your peace of mind; an anxiety, an apprehension of some kind which you have not mentioned. What is it?

V

YOUR last letter has just come. It is nine o'clock. I am sitting beside my fire in the library which I hope you may some day know. Without, the autumn winds are storming. I can hear the rain beat against the long window which opens onto my garden. I can distinguish, between the fitful gusts, the movement of the dead leaves as they flutter over the wet ground "like ghosts from an enchantress fleeing." I feel that summer is ended, that winter is before us, when even these last traces of a warm, brown earth will be covered under the white of January snows!

Indoors what do I feel? Desolation, cheerlessness? No. My curtains are drawn close, my lamp, trimmed and steady, is burning before me. Its light shines upward, chasing the

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shadows into the far corners. And from the hearth a glowing blaze sends forth its genial heat. Here and there, among the rows of books whose honorable leather bindings form the most sociable of wall-coverings, there is a space. One volume leans against the other; they wait thus, holding each other up while the missing tome keeps company with the mistress of the house, opened before her at a favorite passage. Do you feel, dear, I wonder, the peace and comfort of this interior? It is autumn doubtless—the season which goes in our country by the characteristic name of “fall.” But the fast-falling leaves, the bare branches do not mean only that the fair season is at an end. The time for living out of doors is gone, the hour when in our gowns of muslin we lift our faces toward the light, expanding deliciously under the warm caresses of the sun, is passed. But what reason for being desperate or sad? Have we not innumerable occupations in the house to which we can turn with all the more impatience because we have neg-

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lected them for a time? Can we not read, and write, and muse while the fire burns?

Do you not see my meaning, dear, unknown friend?

You write to me, in answer to my last, that there is indeed a secret poison gnawing at your heart. It is the dread that your age inspires within you. You think with awe of the advancing days which take from you, hour by hour, the remnants of youth, while in Nicolas Wainright they sound the full sonority of his powers. You are thirty-eight. He is forty. In a few years you will seem old by his side. Perhaps, you say, at the very moment when at last your destiny so wills it that you may become his wife, you shall be *too old!* Too old, with the feeling, by his side, that you are more nearly a mother than a mate!

Surely, in appearance, this cannot be denied. But your love is steadfast, and appearance is but a small part of it. Think of me now, dear, in my own snug corner, surrounded by my books! Let your lamp be trimmed, let your

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fire be burning from now on, so that when the November storms divest nature of its final beauties there will be a place in readiness within doors, under shelter! Prepare your volumes one by one in the bindings that attract, so that the thoughts may rest with welcome upon this promise of an intellectual feast, after dwelling long upon charms that gratified the eyes alone.

No time is too soon, once a woman has passed twenty-eight, to make ready for the days when she can no longer count upon her personal charms as omnipotent. If she foresees then what her needs will be at the autumnal hour, she will not fear to lose the one she loves. Her choice for the "shutting in" time, for the indoor days, will be made according to her own inclination, and according to the influence exerted over her by her beloved. She may choose as refuge the nursery, becoming, as years go on, more and more absorbed in her children to the exclusion of other interests. She may, as I have done, withdraw

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to the room of books; or she may, as you will do, seclude herself in the boudoir, that place—between the formality of the drawing-room and the intellectuality of the library—where conversation turns easily from reminiscence to confidence; where a man, coming from the battle without finds himself sheltered, protected, and beloved.

You will tell me again that I am too flowery. You do not take me literally. You know what I mean. It is morally, not physically, that you understand me when I say: Do not stand in the garden and deplore the fall of each separate leaf, the end of all outdoor occupations. Withdraw to the cozy corner of the house, with a bit of tapestry in your hands which serves as a pretext to hide the tears that rise sometimes in your eyes as you catch sight of Wainright's face glowing with youth still, by the side of your own where time marks heavily. Wait for the visit of your friend, forget the outside world with which, in cruel combat, you would have to dispute this man you love. For-

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get that at his age he might begin again his life, whereas you can but prolong your memories. . . . In the half light of the little boudoir, reposeful, conducive to peace and reveries, be the reward, the refuge of this man whose love you need to keep.

Don't think that I place you yet in this consoling atmosphere whose praises I sing as I write. No, dear, you are much too young. I say only, do not dwell with melancholy upon what is slipping from you, but face the future and make ready for it in a way that can prolong your happiness and his. Am I right?

VI

YOUR telegram is a shock. I gather from it that Dr. Wainright has been injured in a runaway accident. I am writing Jane to give me news at once, knowing that you will be too much overcome. Courage, my dear friend.

VII

JANE'S letter has come in answer to mine. She gives me sad news indeed! Dr. Wainright has narrowly escaped with his life, he who does nothing but save the lives of others. If those heavy trucks had not happened to be on the road to pinion his carriage as it passed, the horse and all would probably have dashed over the ravine into the lake. It is frightful to think of, and I can imagine the state you were in and the shock you had when you heard that the doctor had been picked up unconscious.

It is like a horrible nightmare from which you are just awakening. The worst is over, Jane tells me, and at once the thought has flashed through my mind that perhaps now your jealousy will be cured once and for all! If so, then this trying emotion will not have been altogether in vain. We cannot pass so close

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to death without being profoundly impressed. Even if it has enveloped us but an instant with the shadow of its wings, we are the wiser for it. We grasp, as though all of a sudden, the fact that it alone is irreparable. When we are free again of the darkness that it has temporarily cast about us we enter upon a new life where joy and sorrow for the first time take their proper proportion. You might have fancied in a moment of excitement that a slight indifference on Wainright's part was the worst thing that could happen to you. That you were really unhappy. But you have watched him now through hours of unconsciousness, when it has seemed to you, I do not doubt it, that you would be willing to have him indifferent for the rest of your life if he could only get well again!

I say you have "watched" him, for Jane gives me at least one good bit of news. Together with this wound, you have received something in the nature of a healing balm. Wainright's mother, Mrs. Winthrope, has

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begged you to come and help her nurse the patient!

In the face of such anxiety her jealousy has subsided, for the time being at least. She makes an appeal to your tenderness to care for her son. She wants you by the side of this cherished favorite, from whom, as a rule, she does everything in her power to keep you.

I can't say too often how creditable I find your gratitude toward Mrs. Winthrope. You go so far as to respect in her a caprice which poisons both your own life and that of Wainright. There is nothing more painful than to be torn between gratitude and love. Beyond any question of a doubt Mrs. Winthrope imposes upon the affection which you and her son show her.

She is inconsequent in her egoism. She gave up her whole young life to Nicolas, whom she adores, this cannot be denied. And she took you into her house when your parents died, and brought you up as though you were her own daughter. Then, lo and behold, at the

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very time when she might have perfected and crowned with glory her good works by blessing your union with her son, she set herself in violent opposition against your mutual happiness.

She had dreams for her son of a marriage which existed in her imagination only (no one else had ever thought of it). If you had tried to place yourself between the dream and its realization she would have looked upon you as the epitome of ingratitude. Her dream will never be accomplished, but she imposes her will upon you. She quietly forbids that Nicolas shall marry at all since he won't marry the woman of her choice, and there is nothing for you to do but wait. Even the bitterness which you sometimes feel against her is quieted now in these delicious hours when you have Wainright "all to yourself." Beware, my dear, that you don't fall ever so slightly into Mrs. Winthrope's egoism by your very delight in monopolizing and wanting to monopolize your invalid.

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You certainly couldn't want him to be sick all the time? Yet you have never been so happy as now? Does this mean then that your happiness depends upon the destiny of others fulfilling some abnormal conditions? Isn't this like your dear adopted aunt?

But you will think me a kill-joy.

One thing at all events I can assure you, which is, that no matter how ill you might be, Nicolas—or any other man, and just because he is a man—would be incapable of caring for you with the assiduity which you have shown during this illness. Men need a little “outside element.” They must have fresh air, change of scene; they want the news, and contact with their fellow creatures, however serious may be the anxieties of their home life. Too much application on the part of some womanly companion, wrung for her, from a celebrated poet, the trying appellation of: “Horrible angel of devotion!”

Don't be cross with me. I am only trying to bring a little “outside element” into your

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sick room. What I especially want you to realize is that present conditions cannot last, but that they can serve a definite purpose. As soon as the doctor is well again he will start on his routine of work, and you will have the same rivals to torment you. But the memory of these days will come back, and, I trust, keep returning as a measure of comparison, as a keynote whereby the future may be attuned.

This trial, I agree with you, will not for this reason be fruitless. You will get well of your jealousy perhaps altogether, just as Nicolas will recover from his bruises. How could you be jealous of a man whom you are tending from morning till night, whose sufferings are relieved by you, and you alone? Whose eyes meet no other smile than yours, whose lips utter no thanks but to you?

You are rid now of all the suspicions that hovered like phantoms between you. You will come to realize that Nicolas, whose very glance you sometimes mistrusted, has never looked at you except with perfect frankness. That he,

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whose word you even doubted, has never been anything but sincere. Who knows? You will end perhaps by being ashamed of yourself? Such a feeling would be the sure cure, the counter irritant that ends by purification.

I can imagine the resolutions you have made. In the twilight of the sick room you have scanned the face you love, when Nicolas has fallen asleep after a feverish hour. You long to tell him all that is in your heart, how sorry you are that you should ever have shown him the petulant ill humor which, you realize more than ever, was without justification. Half drowsy with your long night watches, lulled by the peace that has come over your spirit, you seem to hear, as though in a dream, the voice of Nicolas answering your thoughts. He says to you:

“ Dearest, I bless this accident if it is to be the means of bringing back our happiness again, the old days when you were always gay, always glad to welcome me. There were no shadows between us, only that perfect confi-

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dence that began when we were children together, like brother and sister, and that, as the years went on, grew into the deep, true love of a man and a woman for each other."

VIII

IT would seem, dear, as though the purpose for which I set out writing to you were no longer valid. My letters should come to an end since your life seems to be going on the even tenor of a happy way. But I have grown accustomed to the pleasure of an occasional chat with you, so my pen steals stealthily toward the paper when the mail hour comes round, and I find myself ready to gossip with you about everything, or about nothing.

The news you give me is excellent. Dr. Wainright is progressing slowly—it would be contrary even to your most generous wishes that he have a miraculous cure and be able to rise up and go on his way from one moment to another!

He is just well enough so that you can read to him some not too exciting book. Or, when

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he is tired of that, you take some sewing and sit, as he asks you, between him and the window, where he can "watch your every movement."

You adore him, and you have the courage to tell me so! You never imagined even how deeply, wonderfully, you cared for him until now. He is so good to you, so tender, so loving, so considerate. You know that if you should live to be a thousand nothing could ever come between you again.

Mrs. Winthrope, I take it, is one of the people whom a sick room "makes nervous," so altogether you have things your own way, and you are to be congratulated. Write me, dear, freely of your happiness.

I remember once, when I was a young girl, talking with an elderly woman who had been many years a widow. She liked to dwell on all the details of her past, and as I was sentimental, I suppose, I enjoyed this romance second-hand. I used to make her "begin at the beginning," and sometimes I noticed that, as

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she went on with her story, there were tears in her eyes.

“What is it?” I asked, “that you are most sorry about when you think over your married life?”

“Oh!” she exclaimed, with that melancholy intonation which implies a regret that is irreparable, “if I had only spoiled my husband more!”

It is generally too late that one makes this discovery, and the contrary occurrence has something so alluring about it that I am tempted in this indiscreet way to beg for further news from one, for the time being at least, who is, and who knows that she is, happy.

I can understand your feeling that there is “something never to be forgotten” in the days that you are passing with your convalescent. You are finding, as you say, in this old-new love a bed of rock upon which to build all the security of the future.

If it sometimes happens that a single word for us women can “spoil all our pleasure” we

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have also the fortunate faculty of remembering details that have made us glad.

Doubtless Nicolas has said more than one tender, endearing thing to you during his sickness, which you will never forget. I can hear you mentally adding, as you have listened to him with that smile which is almost luminous on happy lips:

“If he said that, he *must* love me! How could I have doubted it?”

I feel tempted to make a remark which might sound like a warning, and be therefore offensive to you in your present state of mind. So much the worse, I will out with it, for it might otherwise disturb my conscience.

You have noticed that the faster a chauffeur runs his machine the keener he keeps his wits about him? Just now your affair with Nicolas is going at an admirable pace, and all is serene. There are two dangers to be avoided; one that may come from you, one from an outside cause. An almost sure way of breaking off an attachment is to say, “since it’s going

To Mrs. Elizabeth Aiken

to last forever. . . . ” Nothing is going to last forever. The more wide-awake you keep your attention, the greater your chances are of steering free from all obstacles. But—and this depends upon circumstances over which you have no control—the obstacle may loom up suddenly, causing a terrible shock. Then is the time of all others to keep your head about you. As some wise person has remarked, it doesn’t make so much difference what happens to you, as how you act after it has happened!

I don’t know, I am sure, what should lead me into such a turn of mind, for I have your own assurance as guarantee against all further difficulties. You tell me that you laugh to-day at the time when you were jealous without a cause, and that you couldn’t be jealous now even if there were a cause!

But I may go on writing, nevertheless, may I not?

IX

YOUR telegram just received. I am perfectly bewildered. You tell me not to write further, but I cannot help it. I must know what has happened. You say all is broken off forever between you and Dr. Wainright. What does it mean? It is so sudden. Do, out of pity for your unknown friend, send a line of explanation. You can fancy how eagerly I shall await for it!

X

YOUR second telegram came just as I had sent out my hasty note to you.

I am glad that there seems a glimmer of light for you. I hope it comes from yourself. Your letter should reach me to-morrow. Meanwhile have courage. And above all don't, like most of us women when we have found out something that makes us miserable, try to get proofs to confirm it!

XI

AT last your letter has come. It sounds in my ears like the cry of a wounded bird. Poor, dear friend, I pity you truly. Yet we need not dwell upon self-commiseration. In action alone is there any relief from suffering. But first of all, let me see—your letter is written so confusedly and in such haste—whether I have really grasped the situation.

At Dr. Wainright's request one morning when you had come back into his room in the best of spirits, your heart overflowing with tenderness, etc., he asked you to find for him a certain business letter from some medical faculty, which had been in the pocket of his coat at the time of the accident. No one, naturally, in the excitement that had followed, had thought of looking through the doctor's coat pockets. So, with proper directions you

To Mrs. Elizabeth Aiken

found the garment in question. It is from here on that your letter becomes like the recitation of one half mad.

You took out from Nicolas's wallet the envelope which you supposed to be the one in question. You pulled from between its folds a page written over closely, in a woman's hand. At once your eyes fell upon the beginning—your heart seemed to stop beating; you read on, you finished the letter, devouring, as though with the all-sweeping glance of a hawk, every line, every word, every expression of tenderness, of love, of passion, traced in this fine writing of a woman who spoke with the assurance, the authority, the audacity of one who has a right to say what is in her heart because she loves and is loved.

Ah, poor friend! It is useless to say that, having seen the first line, you should have hastily replaced where you found it this fatal missive. No, that would have been superhuman. You did what every woman would have done, what Pandora did. But must you

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suffer as Pandora did? Is it quite the same? Oh, I hope not, and I trust that we can together find some light upon the subject whereby to guide you again toward the happiness that was filling your life.

You remember my words to you in the last letter I wrote before this happened? Everything in the future depends for you upon how you act in the present situation.

What seems more, almost, than everything else, to be galling to you, is that this person who writes in such a way to Nicolas is some one you know about, an actress or something of the sort—some one, you protest, so absolutely inferior to yourself. And if she had been superior? Would that have made it any easier? Wouldn't it, on the contrary, have aggravated your sufferings because they were in a measure without remedy?

“But they are without remedy any way!” I can hear you cry. Perhaps not wholly, if you can call upon your reason, and not let your feelings “get the better of you”; above all if

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you can crush your wounded pride. This is the great affair. The mountain of granite, the wall of iron between you and Nicolas now is this pride outraged.

You would gladly, you say, with more confidence in the unselfishness of your intentions, have kept this discovery from Nicolas. But a glance at yourself in the glass as you turned mechanically to replace the letter, revealed sufficiently that there would be no hiding from your friend what your feelings were. You had not had time even to lay aside your cloak and hat, having arrived only a moment before from your house, which you left every morning as soon as you had finished breakfast.

It seemed to you as you lifted your arms to take off your hat that the very hat pins weighed a thousand tons. You could not weep. You trembled, you kept your face averted.

“Elizabeth!” It was Wainright’s voice. A protestation followed of love, an appeal for forgiveness. Nicolas called you to him—you went. It seemed to you that the touch of his

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hand on yours was like some poisonous sting. When he tried to put his arms about you there was a revulsion which showed but too plainly in the expression of terror and displeasure of your face. Even the dread that this emotion might cause him some serious harm in his present condition did not touch you. You didn't care. The only thought reiterated in your mind was :

“ It is finished. It can never be the same! ” There was an almost tragic sense of self-justification in this idea that your suspicions had all been well founded, that things were worse, more awful, more humiliating than you had ever supposed them in your most jealous moments.

We should never lose sight of the truth which is back of all the conventions that have endeavored for generations to smother it. I may seem paradoxical, but I believe I am right, when I say that jealousy in a woman is the end of her power ; in man, it is the beginning of his authority.

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Now, quite on the contrary, forgiveness is the end of a man's authority and it is a beginning of a woman's power. Deep down, in the bottom of your heart, are you really and truly, vanity apart, jealous of this person who has written to Wainright? Do you suppose that any sentiment he may have had for her has in any way disturbed or diminished the uninterrupted devotion he has, for so many years, shown you?

It may, and sometimes does, amuse a man that you should be jealous when there is no reason for it. It is a tacit admission on your part, not unflattering to him, that his charm is sufficient to attract an admiration which could rival your own. This vague anxiety regarding an anonymous, impersonal being, who represents a possibility rather than an existing state of affairs, is not, I think, displeasing to him.

But there is nothing more humiliating to a man's very marrow than the spectacle of this revulsion brought about in the woman he loves

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by a tangible proof that she is not able completely to fill his life.

Why is it when a woman loves a man that it makes no difference to her, as a rule, what his past has been? Isn't this indifference equivalent on her part to an avowal that what he has done in bygone days—however recent—may be to him as though it had not been? That is to say that there are certain experiences through which a man may pass, not unscathed exactly, that is not the word, but without their having in the slightest degree modified him, diminished him, augmented him, or in any way taken possession of or invaded that part of him which we call the "soul."

If this passing fancy, this adventure, this incident, which a letter has revealed to you had been something in the past, would you not have said:

"Of course I'm not jealous; Nicolas never really cared for her."

It's not in the past though. This letter has a recent date, several days only before the

To Mrs. Elizabeth Aiken

doctor's accident. Perhaps one of the very times when he was most lovely to you he had just received such a letter! . . . The thought is unbearable. But is it upon this thought that you are going to dwell?

Remember that the future is as much yours as the present. You have two courses of action open to you. Forgiveness and persecution.

You can't forgive him. Or at least you say that even if you did, you could not forget, things would never be the same. Who knows —they might be better?

By persecution, even silent—which is the most subtle and ugly sort—at what end will you arrive? You will gradually alienate from you the man whom you love better than anything in the world. It will be your own work, deliberate, determined. In Dr. Wainright's attitude toward you there was never anything that truly, justly, you could reproach. Whatever may have been his feelings for the person whose letter you found in his keeping, they in

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no way affected him, so that you could not be—only a week ago—perfectly happy with him. By persecution you will give substance to a phantom. This incident will take in Wainright's mind even, an importance which you know he, himself, did not give it.

The question to ask yourself is this: "Do you love Nicolas Wainright? Yes or no?" Tell me frankly, and let me know also whether you want me to write again. Perhaps I offend you by my hard reasoning. Don't fancy I am not pitying you. The way you act can alone keep all this from being tragic and deplorable.

XII

YOU have made your own choice. You might have stayed and tried to forget; you preferred leaving. You owed it, you say, to the sincerity of your love for the past not to lie to Wainright to-day. He would perceive the deception. He would know that your words hid your thoughts instead of expressing them. Back of each constrained and painful smile there would be the recollection of your ruined happiness, the vision of another woman. You would rather dash your dream castle to the ground with a single blow than demolish it brick by brick.

I can quite understand your feelings, yet after affirming all this as though you were absolutely sure of yourself, and convinced that you had chosen the better part, you seem traversed by a shade of anxiety. You ask me in rather an appealing accent whether I ap-

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prove of you. With the same "shade of anxiety" in my voice, I respond:

"Yes. . . . I approve of you. If things were exactly as you represent them you would be in the right. It is always deplorable to give way to one's passions of any sort. But there are times when it would be better to sacrifice yourself and others with one fell sweep than to feign a sentiment which is insincere, and which you cannot keep up. What so irrevocable as the mask that falls, revealing the truth to the culprit at the moment he fancies himself pardoned?"

I imagine there is a quiver of uncertainty in your tone as you ask: "Am I right?" You are not wholly convinced. Indeed this very hesitation suggests to my mind that your leaving Wainright was wrong. Question your own conscience. Before you receive this response of mine it will answer like a judge, if you put yourself face to face with it in this way:

"Before you discovered that letter was

To Mrs. Elizabeth Aiken

Nicolas, do you believe, sincere in his manifestations of tenderness?"

As conscience tolerates only the truth, you answer:

"Yes. He was sincere."

"Then how do you explain this letter?"

"I don't explain it. I can't."

"Is it your reason that is shocked?"

"No, my feelings."

This, I recognize, means that your sufferings are all the more keen. It is undeniably awful, what has happened; but perhaps with an effort and patience you might be able to understand how this man who loves you could possibly have done a thing which causes you genuine misery.

You are back again in your own home. Since the fatal morning when you discovered the letter you have not seen the doctor. You are living in that painful atmosphere between old memories that are happy and recent distressing souvenirs. You recollect a thousand little acts on Wainright's part, whose very

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loveliness is poisoned by comparison with the unpardonable act which reflects its disfiguring light upon all the rest.

I believe you are in the most trying position a woman can be. No one, perhaps, but yourself can help you. I should be glad, however, if you wish it, to go step by step with you over the ground, trying to discern—this I believe is what you want me to do, and it is certainly what I want to do—any facts that can plead in favor of Wainright and against your decision.

XIII

YES, you say, help me! You are suffering in the very isolation you have imposed upon yourself. Mrs. Winthrope, naturally indignant at your sudden disappearance, has not written you once in spite of your protestations to her that you returned because you were ill. Nicolas has sent you a letter every day—"the most beautiful you have ever received from him"—but he tells you nothing of his health, he speaks only of his distress at having caused this separation. Yet your state of mind remains unchanged. You are in that condition described by the nuns—who sometimes in their religion suffer it—as "hardness of heart."

To feel as you used to feel you would "give anything." Love, you argue, is like a plant: it suffices for the roots to receive a blow

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for it never, even though it go on living, to be in flower again. Oh, death in life, the days that are no more. . . . Stop short here! You are feeding your own morbid malady.

Let us go back and take up the "history of the case." You were from the beginning more or less of a victim, at least so you considered yourself, because of Mrs. Winthrope's attitude. This idea that she was keeping you from marrying her son blinded you to the advantages of your position. There was in your relations with Dr. Wainright a freedom which is one of love's first requirements. Marriage, by the legal nature of it, implies an obligation. This you have never felt. You have been free to dispose of your heart as you liked, to fix it in the present attachment as long and after whatever manner you pleased. It is in this distinction between the matrimonial bond and the subtler tie existing with fiancés which led Balzac to affirm:

"Il y a des mariages excellents, il n'y en a pas de délicieux."

To Mrs. Elizabeth Aiken

(Some marriages are excellent, none are delicious.)

Between you and the man you love there has been the voluntary give-and-take whose very motives may be polluted by the suspicion of an obligation or the certainty of dependence. Thus, from the point of view of mere love, your freedom should have appeared to you in not too unfavorable colors.

Dr. Wainright, on the contrary, had much to suffer from it. If it was sweet for him to feel that your loyalty bound you to him without the formality of a law, it was bitter to be thus indebted to you, and to be deprived at the same time of offering you that protection which any man longs to give to the woman he loves. He was undoubtedly absorbed in his work, and he looked upon his profession as an object in life. But how infinitely more precious this object would have become, could it have been first of all a means of serving you!

There is something mysteriously agreeable in the chain that one doesn't feel! The bond

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which love creates between the man who toils and the woman for whom he toils is the most comforting reminder of his happiness to the man when he is absent, struggling for success in the midst of life.

Wainright was more to be pitied than you!

As the years go on there is something infinitely dear in the habit any attachment implies. The man, counting no longer upon his youth alone to please, turns with loving gratitude to the woman who, to the end, shows him all the indulgence which makes past attainments seem a present recollection.

Yet as a matter of fact, whither did this separation, caused by Mrs. Winthrope and which should have been an additional bond between you, lead? It made you terribly exacting, and who is exacting is often unjust. It made you restless, dissatisfied, frequently capricious. Your good humor was fitful, and you often showed a distress which offended Nicolas because he could not understand it.

The truth is we spend our life choosing day

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by day between the lesser of two evils. Who knows how miserable you might have been, married to Nicolas? Who knows how blissful you might have been just as you were? What advantage did you take of your opportunities for being happy? How many were the times when your greeting of Dr. Wainwright was cold, *distrait*, because of a suspicion lurking in your mind?

Perhaps you failed him on the very days he most needed a welcome that would give him courage, that would reassure him, gladden him. Alas, even if it were in appearance only, this was the sort of welcome that he coveted. A tenderness, always ready, as a refuge between him and the world. He did not find it with you. You spent sometimes the first half of your hour together in suspicious mistrust because he was perhaps a trifle late; and the last half hour you passed in reproachfulness because he had to leave you early. It was only when you got to the door with him, and felt he was going and that you had been given

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your chance and missed it, that, with a pang of regret, you tried in an instant to show him all the tenderness that was really in your heart! Too late, perhaps? Men are such a mixture of weakness and strength! Perhaps it was at such a time that he turned, weary, disheartened, toward some one who made a habit of being always as amiable as she showed herself in the unfortunate letter you came across? Who knows? Perhaps this person whom you look upon as "inferior" was the rival, not of you, not of your own true, best, and loving self, but the rival of your caprices, the rival of your mistrustful humors, the rival of your failure to make, to *want* to make, Wainright happy.

Don't you still care to do this? Are you softening ever so little? Goethe has said of this constant selection which presents itself at every turning by the way in life: "Choose well, your choice is brief and yet endless." So I believe it to be with you now. If you shut out Nicolas you will shut out from your heart

To Mrs. Elizabeth Aiken

the possibility of happiness. Be a little less proud!

You were happy, but you could not admit it.

I remember one day calling with a friend of mine, an officer in the Salvation Army, upon a poor woman who was living with her husband in the basement room of a tenement in West Street, New York. Needless to describe the misery of her surroundings. Clean, miserable, and threadbare was the miniature lodging which to this poor creature meant a home. But between the wooden rocker and the cook-stove there seemed more than the ordinary warmth sent out from an iron hearth. My friend, on leaving, gave the Salvation Army salutation: "The Lord bless you."

There was an expression of contentment which traversed the withered features of this toil-worn companion, as she said in answer:

"He does!" And then she added, "Not as he blesses me more than anyone else, only I think he does."

I don't make any remarks upon that of this

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poor laborer, except to mention, *en passant*, that I do believe her husband was a happy man.

As a matter of fact we have no *right* in love except to the sentiments we can inspire. Reluctant fidelity is as odious as repentant unfaithfulness. Indeed, in questions of sentiment we have no rights, we have only privileges. Love, *par excellence*, is a question of sentiment. But marriage or an engagement is a social contract based upon a mutual right obtained through a mutual consent. The great and terrible mistake in society is that men, and women especially, mix up the privileges of love with the rights of marriage.

You have a right to any sentiment you can inspire, but you must begin by inspiring it. You will not obtain a harvest by simply beating upon the ground which belongs to you. Once it is yours you must till it, sow it, weed it, until by and by comes the reaping time.

What you feel now toward Nicolas Wainright is a humiliation, a disgrace. I am sure

To Mrs. Elizabeth Aiken

that a dozen times a day in your solitude, through your tears, you murmur:

“To think that he could have done such a thing to *me*, to me who gave him everything; who have sacrificed my life for him.”

You may have sacrificed your life, but your pride still remains. Suppose you begin by sacrificing that, and devoting your life to Nicolas?

I am hard-hearted, you say? No, not at all. I realize fully how bitter this traditional revolution is in you against the thought of being insufficient to fill all a man’s life. He fills all of yours, why should you not in the same way wholly occupy him?

Just now I used the word “traditional.” Certainly if anything is ingrained with the education of a girl it is this idea that, for the man of whom she one day makes a choice, she must be the only, the unique interest. She enters upon marriage with this preconceived and cultivated notion, to which most of her life is in open contradiction. When she perceives once

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for all that what she has been brought up to believe and what really is, are two separate and distinct principles then what does she do? Instead of readjusting her ideas to the facts of the case, and setting about to adapt herself to realities, as a rule she makes the man feel in how far he falls short of the fictitious ideal which she had set up for herself (in a position so exalted, by the way, that she herself recognizes it to be unattainable). This is what you are doing with Nicolas Wainright.

It is undoubtedly better to leave Nicolas and make yourself miserable than to stay and make him miserable. But to tell the truth you are both miserable. With a single gesture of forgiveness you can wipe out this memory that is causing you both to suffer.

Wainright would not respect you, you argue, if you were so lenient with him. Try it and see. Go to him as soon as you can. Say to him this :

“ I love you, and that love is the only thing that should count between us. I am horribly

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hurt. I know that you couldn't have thought much of a person whose letters you could entirely forget. I am perfectly sure she never played any real part in your life, nor was in any way a rival. I can't, in spite of everything, I don't, doubt of your love for me. Only . . . I am wounded to the very depths. My pride is embittered. Give me time, Nicolas. You will forget this, of course, and soon, and I am determined that I shall forget it too. You must help me. I feel it would be absolutely wrong for me to continue thinking of this thing when it has gone out of your mind. All I ask is a little time to forget everything but my love for you."

If you could say this I believe you would obtain a place in Nicolas's heart beyond the reach of any caprice, any passing infidelity of word or deed.

There is no end of harm done to our own characters by moral resistance. Paul's command to us was not to resist evil, but to overcome it by good. In like manner should we

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seek not to resist jealousy, but to overcome it with love.

Now I have written a letter without end. You are tired and I should be if all I said had not come from my heart. I should consider it a good sign if for some time I did not hear from you. Pride has a certain shame about owning that it is vanquished. . . .

XIV

I HAVE been three months expecting an answer which did not come, but it was worth waiting for. It gives me the news I wanted. You are happy. It will "never be quite, quite the same," you say. This is only to alarm me, for you add: "But it may be better!"

You waited until Nicolas was well and could come for you. This was your right. He realized meanwhile, as he never had, just what you were in his life, and how terrible existence would be without you. There is much in knowing the worth of what we possess. Mrs. Winthrope, not, indeed, with any good grace, but as a sort of *pis-aller*, is yielding in your favor, and this just as you were about reconciled to the idea of being happy even though you couldn't marry Nicolas!

I have often observed that the most rapid

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way for us women to get a thing is to stop wanting it. When we do want a thing there is in our desire a sort of intensity which causes us often to defeat our own ends. It is the same way in dreams; if we try too hard to see a thing the effort wakes us up! Jealousy in a like manner brings to an end the dream of love. All awakenings are hard for us. Then why seek the perpetual insomnia of suspicion? Rest, on the contrary, in the happy unconsciousness of confidence and of love. Apply your indifference aptly. This choice between what is and what is not essential constitutes all the difference between nobility and meanness in love as in life. In order not to suffer a great deal, be sometimes willing to suffer a little, and be always ready to enjoy.

XV

IHAVE received the letter written by you and Dr. Wainright together. You will read over my old epistles some day, if you have kept them, and laugh. I wish, indeed, that I might come to the "quiet little wedding in Grace Church Chapel." You know, though I cannot be there, that my thoughts will accompany you to the altar and will follow you with interest in your married life.



P A R T I I I

♥ ♥ ♥

TO MRS. JACK BURNSIDE

NEWARK

NEW JERSEY



I

I WILL come over on Monday, dear Lily, whatever the weather. Do you realize that it is five years since your marriage and that I have not yet seen your husband or your children?

There is no knowing when I shall be in New York again, as I am one of those who, as time goes on, grow more and more attached to their homes, so Monday I shall arrive without fail at one, and you must prepare for a long "yarn" after luncheon.

II

IT is an ill wind that blows nobody any good. Thanks to the blizzard which kept me housed over night under your hospitable roof, I feel quite as though we had not lost track of each other during these last five years. I enjoyed immensely seeing the children. The girl certainly looks exactly like you. The boy, you tell me, is the image of his father. It is rather a curious coincidence that I should not, after all, have met Jack, isn't it? You must let me know whether the storm kept him at his office all night or whether he was able to reach a hotel.

If he had returned home I would have had the pleasure of seeing him for a few hours, but I could not have talked with you as I did, and as I cannot regret having done.

The very fierceness of the tempest without, was conducive to confidence. Moreover there

To Mrs. Jack Burnside

are times, recurring almost rhythmically, when the heart must overflow—that is, the hearts of the unhappy. If you were not discontented you would not have turned to me for advice. I shall keep my promise to answer you as long as you keep me posted as to what is happening between you and Jack.

To tell the truth your case is one of thousands that differ from it only in the minor details of setting and circumstances. This makes it no simpler for you. Indeed, I rather think it sustains and flatters our pride—our womanly pride, which, by the way, is almost always in the state of being wounded, and thus more susceptible to flattery—well, as I was saying, it rather flatters this disqualified sentiment for us to suppose that our case is unique, and that no one has ever quite known what we are living through. Everything is known, dear, and I confess I am more interested in you as it is, than I would be were you not following a general rule from which it depends upon you alone to diverge.

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I shall be glad to give you any help I can, but advice, I find, is like opportunities: the capable provide their own.

To make a *résumé* of the situation, as I grasped it in our conversation Monday, it is this: You were desperately in love with Jack Burnside when you married him. You were eighteen, he was twenty-five. The dream of your life was to be his wife. You lived one year in a boarding-house in New York, and when your first child was born you moved down to Newark and took a house. Jack had a first "raise" in the firm where he works, and you were able, two years later, when your second child was born, to have a nurse, a waitress, and a cook. So much for the facts of the case as they concern your domestic household.

Now, as you look back upon your courtship, wedding, and honeymoon, they seem as something in another life. The happiness which enveloped like a halo those early months of your existence together has gradually lost its brill-

To Mrs. Jack Burnside

liance. You look at Jack to-day and wonder that you could ever have been so "mad" about him. He is perfectly good to you. He gives you more than you had hoped, as far as material possessions are concerned, but he doesn't seem to care for you or for anything as he once did. The tone of your life has become monotonous, and this monotony is varied by slight misunderstandings, perpetually recurring, and which make your relations strained, and at times very unpleasant.

There is never any real reason for a dispute or a discussion. When, unable to sleep at night, you rehearse from beginning to end a disagreeable scene, you cannot put your finger upon any one word or thought which justified the irritation or anger you felt. Yet you have felt it nevertheless.

What, then, is the matter, you ask yourself? You are "just the same" as you were when Jack married you. If he wasn't in love why did he choose you? You had plenty of other chances, and he was attractive enough to have

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married any girl in Newark. But you are not happy. There is a heaviness in your heart which keeps you from doing anything gladly. Now and then, for a day or two, things seem to go splendidly, and then you feel that the honeymoon is to begin again. These harmonious moments are as fleeting as the bright bursts of sunshine between two storms on an April day.

Underlying the outward attitude of every woman toward life is her inward attitude. I might almost say the same of men. The sentimental existence is that which gives color and form to all our deeds. If you are discontented—I don't put it strongly enough to say unhappy—with Jack, your whole existence will be dull and inanimate. This is what you must fight against. And to fight successfully you must search out and attack the causes of your discontent.

When I think over your case as you related it to me, and all the others that resemble it, it seems to me that one of the great sources of

To Mrs. Jack Burnside

discord between men and women lies in these two facts. They should be often remembered as a basis of action. I put them in their briefest form, this way:

Little things make a man happy. Little things make a woman unhappy.

Jack ought to know this, you will say. He ought to be more considerate of you! The surest way after all of obtaining a reward is by working for it!

In the case of a great catastrophe, financial or other, we see women display enormous courage, while their husbands are oftentimes prostrated, overwhelmed. Exactly the opposite is true; the positions are reversed in the occurrence of insignificant difficulties during the daily course of existence.

How many times, for example, have you cried, after you got into bed, over some little neglect on the part of your husband? You know he loves you, you know he is proud of you, you know he works for you as hard as any man can work. Yet a slight thing which

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has "hurt" you makes you forget completely everything else which Jack feels and does for you.

Doubtless Jack, in turn, has a lot of worries in his tired mind. He has anxieties and cares that accumulate during the day and weigh heavily in his thoughts. All is not plain sailing for a bank clerk at his office. Yet, none of these anxieties is so big but that a little act, a little tender act on your part may efface it. Try the effect of these little things to make Jack happy.

A mark of affection given in his absence, an eagerness in awaiting his return, an appreciation of his effort, an impatience to know his opinion, a timely favorable comparison of his merits with those of some business rival, a need of him in all things which makes him feel that he is the only one. . . .

"The only one what?" you ask. The only one who can make you happy. For the man all that lies without his house is uncertain. He doesn't know, in the struggle which he under-

To Mrs. Jack Burnside

takes, how he will be met by fate from day to day. Doubtless the uncertainty of the battle spurs on his courage and determination. It is not of that which we need to think. There is a place of all others where he longs for and covets security: in his house, in the affection of his life companion.

Now, Lily, so long as you permit little things to make you unhappy, Jack will never be sure of you. He will find in your supersensitiveness, changes as brusque and disconcerting as the April deluges to which we have already alluded. In the early hours of married life, perhaps, he humored you. He was allured by the hope of understanding whence came the difficulty which seemed suddenly to rise like a dividing wall between you. Unable with his masculine mind to grasp the elusive details at which you have so often taken umbrage, he will grow gradually disheartened, mistrustful of himself, uncommunicative.

At last he will fall into the dull attitude of the husband who seldom speaks "because he

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never knows how his wife is going to take things." Within your house, Lily, be his security, and let the only little things that come between you, be those that make Jack happy.

P. S. I have reread my letter. I know exactly what your mental observations will be as you peruse the above pages. You will say to yourself that I am old, that I have forgotten what it is to be young and pretty, to feel that you have a right to all sorts of things that you are not getting. You will reflect that my calm reasoning comes from the indifference which attends the waning years of an existence, and you will conclude that if I were in your place I would do exactly as you are doing, that I "couldn't help it." The only answer to that is that I am not in your place, and that I see, with a vision which is illumined by the hard, cruel search light of age. All one's mistakes appear as irrevocable, when it is too late to begin again. I see with this clearness just where lies the

To Mrs. Jack Burnside

“ . . . little rift within the lute
That by and by will make the music mute,
And ever widening slowly silence all.”

I gave you a parting piece of advice: not to greet your husband with a reproach when he returned, no matter how late the storm might have kept him on the way. You will let me know in your next whether my counsel seemed worthy of consideration.

III

SO you didn't listen to me! I don't reproach you. I make a simple statement of facts. My last words were: "Don't have a scene with your husband when he comes in." You promised me, you really did, and I believed you, that you would not let your feelings get the better of you.

In about ten minutes after he reached home you were saying disagreeable things to him. He answered you back, and now you are angry.

Poor man, it wasn't exactly his fault if there was a blizzard such as no one had seen for years; if all the trams were blocked, was it? Yet he protested in vain; what he was to blame for, you insisted, was not the blocking of the trams, but the blocking of himself and of you, stuck off in a suburb and shut in all the year

To Mrs. Jack Burnside

round, as though there were a perennial blizzard! You warmed to the subject as you went on, condemning the life of the commuter: it was like a prison there in Newark, row upon row of houses stretching along like cells, interminable avenues, nothing but the most dreary mediocre people for neighbors. . . . (Jack listened to your description amazed, and his very amazement whetted your longing to condemn everything you could think of.) There were times, you cried out to your poor hearer, when it seemed as though you would lose your mind—your personality you had long since lost—you felt just like an animal cooped up in the stable of a barn, where there were other animals cooped up in other stalls exactly like yours.

After a while Jack sank bewildered into a chair, and you heard him say:

“What have I done to merit this outburst? I thought I was giving you and the children a first-rate home. I don’t see now what there is lacking to make you comfortable.”

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Here you went further than you intended in your most inflamed moments. You didn't care how much he suffered, you were bound to say everything that was pent up in your heart.

"When I married you, Jack Burnside," you cried, "I expected you would, as other husbands do, give me the position in life to which I am entitled. I begin to see now only too clearly what a mistake I made. I shall end my days stuck down here in a suburb, that's plain! And it's not very surprising that I should feel a trifle bitter about it, is it? I should think the least you could expect would be that I have an occasional outburst. Really!"

The fact that your husband works unceasingly, that his business holds a place so primary as to exclude for him all question of pleasures, slipped your mind entirely. You forgot that he comes straight home when the bank is closed, not lingering even to play a game at the club or to take any exercise. And you went on with what you had to say: You had

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learned to expect nothing more from him than the daily effort which made him anything but a diverting companion when he finally did get home. You naturally couldn't help envying the women whose husbands had risen from modest circumstances like yours into a brilliant social position, where the wife was conspicuous and influential. Everybody had always told you, even when you were a girl, that you were made for that sort of a position; that you had just the sort of social talent to fill it. If you had married another kind of man things would be different. As it was, you couldn't help realizing whose fault it was that you were where you were, and that you had no one but him to blame for the dullness and poverty of your existence.

What answer could Jack make to all this? If it were true, nothing. If it was untrue—nothing. He took up his hat and left the house.

When he came in very late you heard him go into the parlor, and there he stayed. He slept on the divan. In the morning he came

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upstairs, dressed and shaved in the bath room, without speaking to you. Once or twice you were tempted to call out:

“Jack, come in before you go. I didn’t mean what I said last night. Forget it, and we’ll begin over again.”

But something within you checked this impulse.

After the scene of the night before you did not send the children down while he was having breakfast. You told the nurse, if he asked for them, to say they were asleep.

When the outside door had closed behind Jack, you started once to the window, thinking that perhaps he might turn as he went around the street corner and glance up to see if you were behind the curtain beckoning to him.

But something checked this impulse, too. You felt it would be a weakness on your part to make this concession.

Big people are just like children at times. Once they have begun to be “naughty” there are only two ways out of it for them: To burst

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into tears and, sobbing, to ask forgiveness, and promise they will "never do it again," or to be more and more obstinate without any fresh cause for anger, but simply because they have got well started.

This is the part you chose. Every time you passed before the mirror all the morning you looked at yourself compassionately. You were struck with your haggard appearance. You were a victim. You deepened the frown on your brow in order to emphasize your bad humor. The best thing, the only thing for you to do, was to pack your trunks at once (the children in them) and go—go where? This you had not quite decided. The details of your flight were vague. But certain one thing was: that Jack Burnside would find the house empty when he came in that evening, and that his despair would serve him right. He deserved every bit of it.

You felt that the waitress had her eyes on you. She knew something was wrong. You would not yield one inch before her.

Letters to Women in Love

It was at this juncture, I fancy, that you wrote to me the letter between whose tragic lines I read. Am I not right in all I have added to what you tell me?

Don't fancy I make light of this nor that I use the word "tragic" sarcastically. At the bottom of your heart, behind your anger, there is something truly serious.

You will not leave your home and go back to your mother to-night. You may even, when Jack comes in, hold out your cheek for him to kiss it, and follow him to the nursery when he goes up to see the children.

But the bad seed sown will grow and keep on growing. What has happened between you and Jack is worse than a misunderstanding. You have said things to your husband which you never should have said, and which he never should have heard. It is as though, with a blow, you had broken the mirror which reflects your two images henceforth with a blemish.

There is something to be said upon Jack's

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state of mind. But I hesitate, fearing that you may find me indiscreet. Let me hear if you want me to go on. My thoughts are with you, and I am troubled for you.

IV

YOUR letter reassures me. I need not fear being misunderstood—so I continue. There is, you tell me, nothing new in the situation, but I wanted to speak with you about Jack's state of mind the other morning when he left the house without speaking to you.

As like as not—Fate enjoys just such ironical paradoxes—he got into the car with one of the young couples who are in all cars. He would have watched with bitterness the turtle-dove sweetness of the young woman, and generalized:

“ All honey before they get you. But once you fall into their clutches, poor innocents! The hardest boss going is mild in comparison! Oh, no! The slave masters were mere under-studies in comparison. Oh, poor young man,

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if you could but realize what is before you, you would stay just where you are. A few steps farther and you will be caught like the insect on the fly paper. Then the struggle will begin, and before the end comes you will have lost, in the perpetual *tugging*, your wings—these first—and then all the rest that could have helped you to be free."

Arrived at the office, he doubtless, as his mind was on other things, received a reproof, which irritated him all the more because it was unjust. He thought again of his poor, combative insect.

"If I were a free man," he concluded, "I wouldn't stand being treated here like a boy of eighteen. But what can I do with a wife and children? If I don't hold on to what I've got, the chances are I'd be offered something worse. There's nothing for it but to bow my head and swallow my pride."

If, just at this moment, he happened to recall his evening with you, the night that followed, his start that morning, the chances are

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that he was quite as angry with you as you were with him.

“If she thinks me such a failure,” he probably said to himself, “she’d better go back to her mother. So long as she is convinced that I am spoiling her life the only thing for her to do is to divorce. Then she can get some man who is able to provide a better setting for the rare gem she thinks herself.”

And this is where you have got to, you and he; to running each other down, insulting each other, trying each to provoke the other to some irreparable injury so that you will have to separate, and then it will be proved to your mutual gratification how much more you were each worth than the other supposed! One would think, by your tenacity, that it was almost a point of honor with you to force Jack into demonstrating how much he would do married to another woman, and into witnessing what your powers would become as the wife of another man. You impress me as two express trains that are tearing toward each

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other, at a speed of seventy miles an hour, on the same track!

I am the poor signalman who throws himself between the two, calling:

“Stop! Back engine! You are going to run each other down and drag others with you in the wreck.”

Shall you hear me? Is there time yet to put on the brakes?

V

YOUR letters discourage me. I cannot deny this, for I see in them a certain destructive element, slow, sure, terrible. If either you or Jack had a definite wrong, one against the other, something for which you could frankly ask forgiveness, I would be less uneasy than I am at present for the future of your home. But it seems as if you were both poisoned through and through without suffering in any special way. Every single one of the conditions that existed when you married are now reversed. Then you longed to live together—now this *tête-à-tête* with Jack is a burden to you. You used to love the sound of his voice, now you find something rasping in it. His smile, which you once considered winning, now strikes you as insipid. You were charmed by his calm, now you think him apathetic.

To Mrs. Jack Burnside

So much for his mere personal appearance. As for your moral attitude, I can judge what that is by the way you respond to my suggestions. I told you to be cheerful. You say that when you seem very gay Jack suspects it is some outside cause which has made you so. I begged you not to criticize, and, above all, not to ask questions when you were sure in advance that the answer must be something—business or otherwise—which you would be happier not to know. Your silence, you tell me, is taken for ill humor.

But there is an average between the mute and the chatterbox. Yes, you respond, but when you endeavor to go over some club discussion, or to tell Jack about some book you have been reading for the library committee, he says he is "too tired" to keep up with women's new fandangles.

In the matter of Jack's work there is the same undercurrent of irritation. You supposed when you married him that the fixed position he had was the best thing for him.

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Now you believe it is what keeps him back, dwarfs all ambition in him, and encourages his tendency for "taking things easy."

Has it occurred to you that perhaps Jack—certainly when you treat him as you did the other night—is possibly a trifle tired of you, too; that his disillusionments may be as lively as yours?

He was attracted by the daintiness of your tastes, but he is beginning to find them rather extravagant. He used to be proud when the men said: "Jack's got an awfully clever wife." Now he feels it might have been better to marry some one not quite so clever and a little more tender. He knew that you had never been very well off when you married him, and he enjoyed giving you the comforts you deserved. Now he is inclined to believe that you are too exacting—he can never do quite enough to satisfy you.

And so it goes. You are like two clocks wound up at the same time and that never strike the hour together.

To Mrs. Jack Burnside

The most innocent words are given an unfortunate interpretation. Some day—I foresee it too clearly—there will be an explosion. Then you will pack up your things. You will write to your mother that you are too unhappy to endure it any longer.

The evening of that particular day Jack will remain in town. He will put up at the club, dine with some bachelor friends who hate women. He will drink to forget his misery.

A few days later there will be a moving van stationed before your door in Newark—like a hearse—come to remove something lifeless, come to remove not only your belongings, which stand scattered about on the sidewalk waiting to be dispersed under the auctioneer's hammer; but your memories as well, all the past souvenirs which went to make up your life with Jack and the children. In the parlor window where your oldest boy used to wait, his nose pressed eagerly against the pane when it was "time for dad," there will be a sign posted: "House to let."

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And in our young country there will be one more home broken up, one more corner stone removed from the edifice which it served to uphold.

I have not half finished, Lily. I will write again to-morrow.

VI

IHAVE not been able to write for several days, during which time your two letters have been received. Things are going as badly as possible, I see. Is there not something you can do?

Let me at least beg of you one thing, which I consider of the greatest importance. Don't, dear, say a single word, or do a single thing which is irreparable.

I can best illustrate what I mean by a story of something I remember when I was a child. My father had taken me to the country for the day. When we got back to the station to take the train home we had a little time to wait. The station was quite empty, but all of a sudden a drunken man came staggering in. He reeled up to us, and, without the slightest provocation, began insulting us. Then he followed his insults by an attempt to strike my

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father, who did not retaliate, but who kept the man at bay by his own absolute, quiet self-possession.

In my excitement, seeing the man so violent, I kept egging on my father to do something in self-defense. But he had taken the very best means: the man seemed unable to come near enough to actually strike him. Finally some people came with a policeman and they took off the man, who was mad with drink.

Seeing how pale I still was when we got into the train, my father said to me:

“There is no knowing how things would have come out if I had answered this creature or made any decisive gesture. He could easily have dealt a death blow with those fists of his. It is a good lesson to remember: we should postpone until the last moment pronouncing a word or doing anything which we cannot ‘take back.’ ”

Your own case is just this: so long as the threat of leaving Jack is hanging in the air, you remain more or less mistress of the situation.

To Mrs. Jack Burnside

If your husband has wrongs toward you he can still own up, ask your forgiveness, and be worthy of it. If you feel, on the other hand, that you have been the one to blame, you will regret it inwardly and let him see, by the acts which speak louder than words, that you are sorry and that you want to take a new start.

But once you have had the misfortune to cross your threshold definitively there is no turning back, nor "making up," nor beginning again. A reconciliation will no longer be yours to command; you will have become the slave of your own decision. There will be no further question of what justice or tenderness might accomplish. The house door will have closed irrevocably upon all those past chances. The weaker will have succumbed to the stronger.

Are you sure that you will always be the stronger?

VII

YOU have given me your promise that you will do nothing rash. But I am not content to leave you in this negative state of mind. I want to put a picture before you more vivid than any you have yet conjured up.

Let us suppose, for the sake of the imagination which needs stimulating, that you are a disinterested spectator who attends the hearing of the divorce case *Burnside versus Burnside*. I am the examining magistrate. I shall hear first your husband's, then your deposition, before handing them over to the presiding judge for a final sentence.

I take it that your husband presents himself at my rooms, requesting a private hearing. My face wears the set and determined expression of the lawyer who can be influenced by

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neither party. After the usual formalities are exchanged, I begin, rather severely:

Judge. "You know, I presume, that a plea for divorce has been filed against you by your wife?"

Jack. "Yes. I know it."

Judge. "You are not surprised at this?"

Jack. "I am amazed. I can think of no way in which I have failed to keep my part of the marriage vows!"

Judge. "Your wife does not accuse you of failing to keep them, but it doesn't suffice merely 'not to have failed,' you owe something more than this to the woman you love."

Jack. "I've done everything I could to make her happy."

Judge. "You haven't succeeded."

Jack. "Why? What was it she wanted?"

Judge. "She is young, she is pretty, she is intelligent. . . ."

Jack. "I guess I know that better than anyone. I picked her out, didn't I?"

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Judge. "You ought not to have picked her out if you were unable to appreciate her good points, to say the least."

Jack. "I thought it would satisfy her if I was proud of her. I supposed she'd go on making herself pretty and intelligent for my sake, and that this would be enough."

Judge. "You are an egoist. You want to hide your light under a bushel. The light is made to shine for all!"

Jack. "Who, everybody? Other men?"

Judge. "Other men and other women; the people around you; society in general. A woman like the one of whom we are speaking has a right to be something more than a commodity in her husband's home. She should expect to be not only a wife and a mother, but to have some sort of life of her own, some interests outside the housekeeping, if it so please her."

Jack. "It comes rather high, this double existence, as far as expenses are concerned.

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The truth is, my wife reproaches me with not earning enough."

Judge. "The reproach is a serious one."

Jack. "Certainly. But it's not fair to make it to me."

Judge. "To whom should she make it?"

Jack. "To my employer. He keeps me busy nine or ten hours a day. He takes up every bit of intelligence I have. If I should ask him to raise my pay he would show me letters from a dozen men just waiting a chance to step into my boots."

Judge. "Well, then, to sum up the case, you are satisfied with your married life, and your wife is not. You don't see any new effort you could attempt, or anything you could suggest to make her more content?"

Jack. "No. Unless she went back to her mother and let me go strike out somewhere in the West for a fortune."

Judge. "Is this what I am to tell her from you?"

Jack. "Yes. And you may add that I love

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her. I love her, even though she is tired of me; even though I'd never want to be a great man in others' eyes if she were only satisfied with me."

VIII

IN my last letter I left off with the end of Jack's deposition. Since it seems to interest you I will resume my functions as examining magistrate and ask you to appear before me. I hardly need remind you that under similar circumstances you are requested to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Yet I begin with a forewarning:

Judge. "You will be perfectly sincere, Mrs. Burnside."

Mrs. B. "I am sincere."

Judge. "You must make your responses unruffled."

Mrs. B. "I am not ruffled. I am disgusted."

Judge. "With whom? Not with your husband, I hope?"

Mrs. B. "Not with him exactly, but with the sort of life he makes me lead."

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Judge. "Explain yourself."

Mrs. B. "In the first place, Judge, I don't believe you realize how much attention I had before I was married."

Judge. "I can easily understand it."

Mrs. B. "There were two young men, for example, who were my absolute slaves. Either one of them would have been a better match for me than Mr. Burnside. If I told you their names you would know who they are. They are prominent in Wall Street. Hardly a day passes but there's something about them in the papers."

Judge. "Did either of them marry?"

Mrs. B. "Oh, yes, after I married; when they realized there was no hope for them."

Judge. "And I suppose there is mention of their wives in the newspapers, too?"

Mrs. B. "Not on account of the women themselves. They are perfect nonentities. Nobody would ever hear of them if it weren't for their husbands."

Judge. "There are others in the same posi-

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tion. But tell me one thing: If these two men were your 'absolute slaves' why did you choose a third when you married?"

Mrs. B. "That's what I've asked myself enough times in the last few months."

Judge. "In the last few months, yes—But when you made your choice?"

Mrs. B. "I suppose I saw qualities in Jack which he didn't possess."

Judge. "What were those qualities?"

Mrs. B. "I couldn't name them. . . . I suppose I was in love with Jack to begin with, and when you're in love you don't analyze."

Judge. "And when you're no longer in love you criticize."

Mrs. B. "But why did I stop loving him?"

Judge. "That's just what I was asking you."

Mrs. B. "I think I know. I imagined he loved me for my own sake, and I found he loved me for his."

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Judge. "What do you mean by 'loving you for your own sake'?"

Mrs. B. "I mean that I supposed he would have but one object in life; to find out and satisfy every wish before I had time to express it. To make something of himself for me."

Judge. "And what do you mean that he loved you for his sake?"

Mrs. B. "He took it for granted that all I wanted was to keep house, have children, order the meals, look after the servants, economize for him, from one year's end to the other, with no time to do anything for myself; till finally I began to believe I was never meant for anything but a drudge."

Judge. "And if you had been something more than a drudge, do you suppose you would have been happy with Mr. Burnside?"

Mrs. B. "Yes, of course. Any woman with a brilliant social position would be happy."

Judge. "I'm not speaking of 'any woman.' You are the person in point. What I conclude is this: Mrs. Burnside has nothing against her

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husband. If she is not happy it is because he gives her no sort of social position. This is correct, isn't it? You hesitate——”

Mrs. B. “No. I don't hesitate. That is correct.”

Judge. “Well, then, the hearing is at an end. I will sum up the evidence on both sides and come, after deliberation, to a conclusion.”

IX

QUICKLY, before hearing from you, I go on with my judicial work!

I have just reread your deposition (that is to say, the one I presume you would have made if I had been a judge and you had appeared before me).

Alone in my study, I have only the legal papers and the scales of justice before me. Like every self-respecting magistrate I shall write down my impressions while they are fresh in my mind. When this is done I shall seal my letter, asking you to find inclosed a copy of my notes made as follows:

“Appeared before me to-day the Burnside couple, husband and wife. To the best of their ability they have answered me as to the motives of their disagreement. They are convinced that their case is extraordinary, unique. As a matter of fact, it is quite common. It is the

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case of about half the marriages made . . . the good ones, that is. It is a crisis they all pass about the end of the fifth year. . . .”

(You can imagine, my dear Lily, how fond I must be of you to send you such a note as the above. I jeopardize your confidence in me, I risk making you lastingly angry. People always turn their backs promptly on those who begin by telling them there is nothing unusual in their case, and that their misunderstandings are the same as everybody else's. I can't help it. I must take my chances. I have promised to be sincere, so here goes for the rest of the notes.)

“ The most striking thing in the Burnside *versus* Burnside deposition is this: The husband is still in love with his wife, and perfectly sure that he could be happy with her. The wife thinks she is no longer in love, and that her husband could never make her happy again.

“ He says: ‘ It only depends upon her for everything to go as it should.’

“ She says: ‘ For anything to go as it should

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everything would have to go differently from the way it has been going, and a trifle more prosperously.'

"The husband puts his hopes in his wife, and the wife puts hers in a prosperity outside her husband. The husband would be happy if his wife would consent to smile, and the wife would consent to smile if her husband's employers would raise his salary—or make him a partner in the firm."

Ah! I draw a long sigh. What is to be done about it?

X

YES, you write me, it is perfectly true that if Jack could only "get on" a little and have a raise in salary or become a partner in the firm, you believe that everything would be different.

I have an idea, Lily. I am going to try and put it into execution. I can't tell you what it is yet, but if it succeeds everything will come out well. So as long as there is hope I am not going to give up to the real anxiety that is weighing on my heart on account of you and Jack and the children. It would be too awful if you were to break up your home, and all for what reason, really! Everybody is more or less unhappy in this world, everybody is more or less impossible to live with. Flaubert wrote in one of his letters that as long as he had any family his only idea was to get away from them, to escape to the ends of the earth rather

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than be with them. Then, he says, when they were all dead, he clung to the very walls of the house that had sheltered them.

Everybody is not as frank, but almost everybody resembles Flaubert somewhat in this respect. We must not be too assiduous about finding our happiness, it is elusive; like a shadow, it escapes if we pursue it, and if we run away it follows after us!

I am very cheerful over the thought of this new plan, and I will write again as soon as I have news to give you of my scheme.

XI

I GOT your letter, all eagerness and curiosity, on my return from New York.

For I must tell you that my "scheme" took me up to New York, and much nearer to you than you suppose, though I did not stop long enough to see anyone, accomplishing what I had to do between trains. I can't say that I obtained exactly what I went for, but I am glad that I went and I am going to tell you everything, and you can draw your own conclusions according to the way what you hear affects you.

Well, then, on arriving in town, I went straight from the train to Wall Street, to a bank—to Jack's bank—but not to see Jack. It was to see his employer that I had taken my four hours' journey.

There are times, even at my age, when I for-

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get my gray hairs, when I feel as though I could move heaven and earth, as a young woman can, just by wanting something badly enough! It wasn't my old age alone that made me fail in the direct object for which I aimed. But, first of all, you don't know what a nice office Jack is in, because you told me so long as he has only an inferior position in the bank you don't care to visit it.

The directors' rooms are furnished in sumptuous style, and the proportions are spacious and lofty, so that I had the feeling of being in a very first-class sort of establishment from every point of view. I can't say that I specially envy the clerks who spend their lives cooped up like chickens down on the lower floor, but . . . I didn't come to see them. I came to see the director. What for? To talk with him about Jack.

He received me behind his wide mahogany table, laden with papers and pamphlets. I was sure each moment had its value in money for him, and I fancied he was saying to himself

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how old I was, and why did I have to come and bother a busy man like him.

Fortunately, we had mutual friends who formed a certain starting point between us, and when he had "placed" me, as it were, his face relaxed. It was as though he had taken off the mask of the bank director, and was letting me see his own features. Just this change in his expression made him seem human and accessible, instead of stern and repellent. I realized that there were two distinct personalities before me; one who felt only his interests and the other who was interested in his feelings. I addressed myself, of course, to this latter.

"I have come," I said, "to speak to you about a friend of mine who is in your employ in the bank."

"A friend of yours?"

"Yes. Jack Burnside."

"He's a fine fellow." And then he added, "He's a first-rate business man. I let him do a lot of private work for me. He's intelligent

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and he minds his own affairs, which some of them don't."

"I am very much interested in him," I responded, "and in his . . . advancement."

Silence.

I went on:

"If he is so much more discreet than 'some of them,' I suppose he is really valuable to you?"

"Undoubtedly."

Again silence.

"I think," I began, "he rather hoped this New Year—not that he ever mentioned the matter to me, I heard of it through outsiders—wasn't there some talk of raising him then?"

The director hesitated a moment. He moved forward in his revolving chair and put both arms on the table before him. There was a paper cutter within reach. He turned it over once or twice, and then let it drop.

"There's been a question more than once of giving Jack Burnside a raise in salary."

My eyes were all eagerness.

To Mrs. Jack Burnside

The director shoved himself back in his chair again, and joined his fingers together, looking at them while he waited to speak. Then he said :

“ Well, I’ll tell you just how it is. The reason Jack Burnside doesn’t get on is because we can’t absolutely depend on him.”

He looked up to see the effect this would have on me, and noting my astonishment, he exclaimed :

“ He’s the soul of honor. We haven’t a squarer man under the roof of this building, nor in all Wall Street. His character, as far as that’s concerned, is spotless, all right. But it’s his everyday character that I mean. You can’t say a man has moods exactly, that’s more in the woman’s province,” his eyes twinkled as he glanced at me. “ But one day Burnside will do the work of two men, and a week later it’ll seem as though he couldn’t fix his attention on anything. If you didn’t know him you’d say that day that he had no intelligence. If you’d seen him on other days you’d say he had

Letters to Women in Love

something on his mind, something that was troubling him pretty seriously."

The director rapped the paper cutter up and down a few times, and then, having taken his decision, he lowered his voice, as though a director should not have such feelings:

"If you want to know my opinion about the man, I think he is unhappy. I think his wife makes him unhappy." And then, almost as though in defense, he went on: "There are about as many fluctuations in human relationship as there are in the market. Business isn't the only thing worth taking stock in. If you're made the way I am, you can't help noticing the people around you. I take an interest in Burnside. I want him to get on. I've never had any personal conversation with him, but I'm willing to wager you with big odds that the days he comes in here as absent-minded as a mad hatter his wife's been nagging him."

Then presently he continued:

"I've no right to say such a thing, especially to another woman. But that's the truth. You

To Mrs. Jack Burnside

asked me about him, and that's what I think. He's nervous, scared half the time, depressed, sometimes he is reckless and sometimes he is as humble as Uriah Heep. What a man wants in our work is steadiness. I believe Burnside would have it, if he got the proper sort of encouragement at home."

"And," I asked, returning to my original purpose in coming to the director, "you think this makes a difference in his advancement?"

"Of course it does."

"But you don't think it's impossible for him ever to be more than he is in the firm?"

"Why, the chances are all in his favor, if it wasn't for what I tell you. Only the other day I had a plan on foot in his interest. The very morning I expected to announce good news to him he came in here half awake, I should say his thoughts anywhere but on his work, and before the morning was over, out of sheer absent-mindedness, he'd made a blunder for which I had to reprimand him. I hated to do it, too. He looked as though he hadn't

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slept all night. But you can't make allowances when it's a question of dollars and cents, and other people's money at that. We'll see. I hope for the best always, but this only happened about ten days ago."

I thanked the director for all he had told me, his frankness, and I took leave of him.

Lily! Ten days ago! Wasn't it the very time you wrote me of your first real, serious quarrel?

Isn't there something true in what the director said about "encouragement received at home"?

Well, you are not angry at what I have done? Write soon in any case, I am eager to hear from you.

XII

I CONFESS I am rather discouraged. It may be faint hearted on my part, but I beg you to come to my rescue. You are the cause of my most haunting dreams. But I don't need anyone to help me interpret these dreams. Unlike Pharaoh, I know exactly what they mean. They are only too clear. Shall I give them to you? I had two in one night.

First I saw you in your mother's house in Waterbury. You looked so girlish that I had to ask myself whether it was your present self, or the Lily of long ago.

I concluded that it was you as you are today, for across your brow and on either side of your mouth there were fine lines such as children scratch on the faces of their wax dolls. These lines seemed to be the heralds of two

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separate and distinct thoughts: discontentment with self and disillusion with life. Both contributed to give a melancholy expression.

You were not reading in my dream, nor working. You did not even glance out of the window by which you were sitting. You appeared plunged in meditations, and I felt very keenly that you were not turning over some new hope, that you were far from contemplating, for example, a second marriage with a man who would know better than Jack how to give you what you wanted. No, it was not forward, but backward that you seemed to be looking—backward at what you had left irrevocably behind you.

And who knows what you were seeing? The most monotonous landscape, when we get far away from it, assumes for our eyes the enchantment which poets say that distance always lends.

It was in your own room that you were sitting, the very room where I had come to kiss you under your wedding veil before you were

To Mrs. Jack Burnside

quite a bride. That day of your wedding you had looked about at the walls left bare, when you had taken down all your girlish souvenirs. It had seemed to you that last night before you went away as Mrs. Burnside that those blank spaces were like the unknown future before you, and that they would be filled soon with memories happier than any girlish recollections. Nothing had been touched in your old room. Your mother had left all just as it was on your wedding night. Now you stared again at the blank spots on the walls, and it seemed that they corresponded with a void in your own heart, and which nothing had come to fill.

Suddenly some invisible servant behind the door rang a bell in the hallway. It was lunch time. You recognized this tinkle tinkle which had called you all your childhood to meals. Now the bell sounded as though it were a trifle broken. It seemed to say; it is the same bell in the same room, but it is broken, and it no longer has the same sound.

Letters to Women in Love

You rested your elbows on your knees and bowed your head. A sob shook your frame. The little bell went on ringing. You did not stir, you could not go down. You were weeping. How I longed in my dream to go over to you and take you in my arms! To say:

“Lily, dear, you know what the reason is for your tears, don’t you? You have drifted away from the companion who walked side by side with you, and now you don’t know where to turn. You draw back on this threshold of solitude. You are distressed, perplexed beyond words.”

Yes, I longed to go to you, but my feet were held fast, as in dreams they always are. I could only stand and look at you, and pity you, while I watched you weep.

And Jack—where was he? I seemed to see him, too, in a second dream.

It was the hour when he used to turn into Broadway, on leaving the office, and rush for the car that took him across town to the ferry. Instinctively now his footsteps fol-

To Mrs. Jack Burnside

lowed in the old direction. He stopped short, he sighed, and then he laughed such a scornful laugh. .

“ What a fool I am,” he said. “ I let my feet lead me along just as though we would find our home at the end of the way. Our home is gone! ”

The sneer with which he added the last exclamation would have rung bitterly in your ears.

Here Jack paused, then he loitered down another street. He was in no hurry. Why should he be? My eyes went sadly in pursuit of him. Twice he stopped to look at some children that passed, hanging on the arm of their mother, children who were just about the same age as yours—as his.

Then he got on a car and went up to the club. Jack at the club surprises you? He never went in for sport, nor drink, nor cards. He looked less than ever able for sport; so old, so haggard and weary. He was even a trifle careless in his manner of dressing.

Letters to Women in Love

Once at the club, some of the men called him to join in a game of bridge. He went and sat down with them, but he didn't keep his place long. He took no interest in the game; he was playing only to forget himself. Not one moment did the frown between his brows relax. The coarse jokes that were exchanged around him did not rouse a laugh from him. The men noticed this. Some one said:

“Come off, Jack; what's the matter with you? You look as dismal as—”

Surely something was the matter with him. Can you imagine what it was?

He ended by throwing down his cards, and then he went into the bar and installed himself before a glass of whisky. His eyes ran along the bottles that stood in rows on shelves behind the table. He seemed to be spelling out the labels. He kept glancing around at the others who were drinking, at the white coat of the bartender, as if he were seeking some one—a human being with whom he might talk out and say what was on his mind.

To Mrs. Jack Burnside

“ Give me another Scotch ! ” (On his heart perhaps.)

In absence the faces of those we love come so vividly before us. Their features seem clearer than in reality. All that ever displeases us in them fades away, leaving only the desirable. We feel as though we had let slip all the chances we had to pour out our hearts to them ! Oh, how eloquently we might talk if they were only here ! How happy we would be to indulge all their desires—even the most unreasonable. Surely, if they could know it, they would be touched by such devotion, such submission, such ardor.

“ Another whisky : high ball.”

Here my dream came to an end. But, Lily dear, do you know that terrifying expression that men who drink wear suddenly as the fire of the alcohol begins to filter into their veins ? First, their features grow brutal, heavy. Their eyes become brilliant, and they fasten upon some object ; but behind the object they appar-

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ently see other objects, they stare at things invisible.

How horrible it would be if you were ever to perceive Jack's face with this fixed, repulsive gaze of stupidity in the eyes. You remember how you used to love him—how, perhaps—I was going to say you still do love his frank, straightforward glance, the expression of good humor that characterized him. It was partly his very being so jolly that attracted you at first.

And to-day? As I saw him in my dream there was something threatening, fearful in his looks. He was seeking some one, as I told you—some one against whom it seemed as though his hatred were gathering like a storm cloud. And his eyes were reproachful and sad. They seemed to say to the invisible enemy:

“Oh, why have you, whom I always loved, driven me thus *to the dogs!*”

XIII

NO letter has come from you, but I continue, having yet so much that I want to say while I feel there is time.

It was in a dream that I saw you and Jack as you might appear after you made the terrible decision to separate. It is with crude reality that the case of the children presents itself to me.

The child whose parents are divorced remains like a bit of timber floating on the waves after a wreck. It is buffeted hither and thither by storm and wave and wind, and it may cause serious harm to the vessel, wending its way with a freight of human souls toward a safe harbor.

There is no country in the world where so much is done for children as in America. When one visits the public schools one feels

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that the interest of government and teacher alike is bent upon the boys and girls who come still under the head of children.

If you converse with any philanthropist nowadays, almost the first confession he makes to you is: "The children are what I give my attention to. They are the ones for whom we never work in vain."

At the department of public charities what is the spirit? The same. Indeed, so far is the hope of officials centered on the young that there is difficulty at times in arousing a practical compassion for aged men and women who are forced to appeal to municipal authorities for succor.

America is young herself. It is natural that she should be more attached to her future than to her past, to her hopes than to her memories. But what does this mean for us who are no longer in the generation of children? Does it not mean sacrifice, constant sacrifice? Does it not mean the perpetual vigilance over others which implies the abnegation of self?

To Mrs. Jack Burnside

If the State and philanthropists and the city do so much for children shall we, their parents, do less?

“But nobody,” I can hear you protest, “does more for her children than I do.”

I grant that they are treated like little princes, as far as the luxury and daintiness of all that you provide for them in the way of physical care. (Indeed, there are many princes who have not half as much as your children have.) But—are their bodies all? Is it enough to give them hygienically prepared food, baths in porcelain tubs, fresh air in all weather——?

Let me tell you that the directors of the New York orphan asylums, when they had given the best possible material surroundings to their children, found that there was something lacking. What was it? Their charges had everything that they could need, yet, instead of becoming little men and little women, they turned out little “creatures,” with no practical or sentimental sense of life.

What was the matter?

Letters to Women in Love

The committee asked themselves this question. The answer you have already given yourself:

“Children need home influence. . . .”

Stronger than any outside action that could be brought to bear, they concluded there was the effect upon them that home environment could give.

The result you know if you have followed the evolution of the Bureau for Dependent Children. Instead of herding the foundlings together under one irreproachable roof with every hygienic convenience, they scatter them about, one here, one there, in the poor families where, no doubt, there are microbes galore, but where there is also a moral atmosphere, and a mother and a father to love them.

This question of loving one's children is not all. There is more. Don't you remember when you were little how regularly your small friends used to ask you, and you, in turn, I presume, used to ask them: “Which do you like

To Mrs. Jack Burnside

the best, your father or mother?" Can you recollect, in all your childhood, having ever heard to their query any response given other than the loyal: "I like them both the same"?

Generally it was not true, for, whether you could argue it out or not, there was always in your little heart, and in that of your friends, a tacit preference for one parent or the other. But you wanted your comrades, and they wanted you, to think that your affections were divided equally. Was it not, then, a natural sequence, since you loved them both so much, that you should want them both to love each other?

I can recall so well the happy memories of my life! When I was but a tiny girl, at the age when the sand man comes too soon, and "you have to go to bed by day," I used to kiss my parents good night and follow the nurse reluctantly upstairs. Then, when she was busy with something, I would stealthily slip down again and back to the sitting room "for one

Letters to Women in Love

more good-night kiss." My dear mother was young still—only a girl, she seems, as I think of her now with her crown of golden hair. When I had crept over the threshold, guilty, exuberant, how often have I been a trifle awed by what I saw. The young mother had left her corner place in the sofa. She was standing by the father, both arms were around his neck, her head was bowed over his, and her lips touched his hair. I could not analyze my feelings, I was only a tiny child. . . . I stole back silently along the hall. I was happy and a little bit proud, as though I had seen something that everyone could not see. Mother and father were not thinking of me, that was certain. But because of the instinctive discretion which had made me go, unannounced, back to nurse, I considered myself much more "grown up" than though I had obtained my longed for "good-night kiss." And perhaps, as I fell asleep, there was a comfortable, motherly feeling in my heart that some day I would "like to be married, too."

To Mrs. Jack Burnside

Well, dear, what I mean by my long reminiscence is this :

When we are little our parents represent for us not one man and one woman, but all men and all women, the outside world, in fact, power, justice, wisdom. This is something that, so long as our children are young, we should not forget. I can't tell you how many times in the cruel vicissitudes of life my thoughts have gone back to the picture of that young mother bending, all tenderness and love, over the one whom she sought to reward and console.

We must be for our children an illusion—the illusion.

“ No! ” I can hear you protest. “ What is the use in deceiving them? ”

You will not be deceiving them. And as for undeceiving them, life will do that fast enough. No, what you have a chance to give them is just that sacred something which the orphan asylums can't provide. You can give them the atmosphere of confidence in life, understanding

Letters to Women in Love

of humanity, happiness in the present, hope for the future, based on faith in what is loyal and enduring. Illusion? Yes. But such illusion as made knights in the Middle Ages and heroes in all times.

XIV

I KNEW you would not agree with me in my last letter. Yet your dissidence is only half-hearted, for you admit that things are going a trifle better at home, and you ask what I would advise, in case you decided to try and put up with another year, anyway, of your present trying existence.

You call me "poetical," and I perceive the slight tone of scorn with which the epithet is applied. (I can remember my grandmother's accent as she used to affirm: there's only one thing worse than an artist; that's a poet.) Well, if I do sometimes abandon myself to dreams and flights of the imagination, I have, you will admit, my practical side.

It isn't possible to dole out, like soldiers' rations, the exact receipt for "what to do" when you are not happy with your husband.

Letters to Women in Love

Circumstances are complex, and they present themselves always in the unforeseen manner which disconcerts any prearranged plan of campaign.

Yet there are a certain number of things that one can apply successfully in the most distressing daily experiences, obtaining results that were un hoped for.

Well, in the first place, since it is best to begin with the drastic measures, I would order you to forget yourself—not occasionally, but entirely. Just put absolutely out of your mind Mrs. Lily Burnside. Cast aside instantly all claims which she may have to individual importance. Disregard any pretensions she may hold out toward "her rights" to be happy and to be "made something of." It is in self-obliteration that a woman finds herself. It is by sacrifice—not to say suffering—that she becomes happy. The very surest way to secure attention—the sort you had without trying for it when you were a girl—is to be attentive yourself. Don't neglect little things. Remem-

To Mrs. Jack Burnside

ber the effort made by your husband outside, and the response it calls for within the house.

Be in a receptive attitude when Jack arrives home; wait to hear what he has to tell you; don't pounce upon him with some story of how exasperating the servants have been. When he has got through relating his day's experiences and effort, the chances are you will have forgotten (what it is just as well Jack should never know) that the cook has ruined your best muslin dress with a big scorched mark right in the front breadth of the skirt.

On the other hand, don't be so abstract that Jack is bewildered. Don't have your head full of notions got out of some book you may have been reading. Be simple, and, above all, be comprehensive. Put yourself in the other's place. If possible—this seems almost too much to ask—let your husband feel that he makes you happy. And when you are unhappy show all the loving feelings you can conjure up, for a man is always touched by a woman who seems to love him—even his wife.

Letters to Women in Love

Don't ask questions only to find out something you would be much happier not to know. And don't, in a conversation on general topics, admit only what you want to believe. Both of these things exasperate our masculine brothers. It is characteristic of men to live in the present. We women have made the past unpleasant to them by reproaches, and the future trying by threats. "I remember how you—" and "If you—"

The woman, moreover, lives generally in the future when she is happy ("of course, this can't last"), and in the present when she is unhappy ("there is no reason why things should change").

It is never well to attempt deciding everything in one critical moment.

Don't say what you don't mean (this is one of our favorite resources), and don't be hurt when you are taken seriously. Avoid issues. When things are going badly and you are both displeased, try to think of something for which you are truly grateful, or something

To Mrs. Jack Burnside

which you admire in Jack. This will act as the little pebble placed in the course of the torrent, and which serves, by turning it aside, to avert a cataclysm.

But this is enough advice to spend a whole year applying it. Take twelve months about it. Then write me and let me know whether the darkness has befallen you, or whether the light has shone upon your tears to make a rainbow of hope and promise.

It is all worth while. The least little effort toward control and self-sacrifice is ennobling from the moment that it has as aim the happiness of another, the harmony of a household, the stability of a home.

Until a year, then, and always yours faithfully.

XV

I HAVE long since passed the age when one is in any hurry to see the years fly by. Yet, I must confess, I was very impatient waiting for the time we had fixed upon to expire. I argued with myself in this way:

“If she doesn’t write to me at all I shall know what to understand.”

But you did write to me. I have your letter open before me now, yet, believe me or not as you like, I knew what was in it before I unsealed the envelope.

Handwritings speak as clearly as words. Some say: “I bring bad news.” Yours said: “I am the bearer of glad tidings!”

Moreover one doesn’t write on blue paper when one has a *gray* point of view! And people who have taken a lasting hatred to their homes don’t have the names of their cottages printed on their stationery.

“My dear old friend,” the welcome hand-

To Mrs. Jack Burnside

writing begins. It is calm and steady and mistress of itself, this writing which I once knew so nervous, so trembling, so in rebellion against people and things, like her who guided the pen.

My answer is: Dear, dear Lily. My arms are open to receive you!

So you are happy again? Very happy! And Jack? His happiness and yours are one and the same. And the secret of it? Oh, it's not complicated!

I once asked a small boy what he would do if he were alone, and a wolf all of a sudden appeared. He answered decidedly:

“I would run away!”

“And suppose you were with your small brother?” I queried. The answer was as decided again:

“I would stand in front of him!”

Thus, if instead of defending ourselves we become the protector of another, fear vanishes and strength is given us.

You, Lily, were unhappy so long as you thought that Jack did not do enough to pro-

Letters to Women in Love

tect you, and that you always had to be doing something for yourself.

You have been happy now ever since the day you realized that it was you who had to protect Jack, that it was he who was confided to you daily after the outside battle, when he returned to his home and to his own.

You don't want to be anything more now than "Jack's wife." And do you know what will probably be the outcome?

After being really Mrs. Somebody in your own house, you will begin to be Mrs. Somebody outside. For the atmosphere that surrounds a happy couple is like the perfume of freshly gathered flowers. One turns one's head to see where it comes from. Indeed, the happy couple pass in the midst of smiles, a consolation, an example. Silly people say: "How lucky they are!"

Wise people add: "They deserve their happiness."

You know better than anybody else, dear Mrs. Somebody, how well "they deserve it"!

P A R T I V

♡ ♡ ♡

TO MRS. MORTIMER CAIRESBROOKE

DUPONT CIRCLE

WASHINGTON



I

THE question with which you conclude the closely written pages of your letter caused me some surprise. If I were to say that I was horrified you would look upon me as a prude, and bring me no further confidences. My feelings are not in any way hostile to the vagaries of the human heart; moreover, your very indecision makes your case, may I say hopeful? Interesting at all events. As a matter of fact, is not indulgence the better half of wit: *tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner*—to understand all is to forgive all, as Madame de Staël said.

I understand you, I believe you, dear, but you have set me to reflecting. You have waited some time for the answer which you expected by return of post, but this answer is not easy to give. I was, as I tell you, unprepared for what you ask me.

“Can a woman love two men at once?”

Letters to Women in Love

Let us face the facts of the situation as you state them to me in your letter before beginning to speculate.

You are twenty-seven years old. You have been married to Mortimer Cairesbrooke for seven years. Mortimer is the best friend you have in the world. You love him better than anyone. All this you tell me hurriedly, as the confession of a person who is guilty.

The rest of your letter is the defendant's plea. You are so often alone. Mortimer lives out of doors—you cannot endure sport. Mortimer hates reading—you cannot exist without books. The list of these paradoxes in which you figure on one side and Mortimer on the other is long. Each hour of the day, indeed, marks the opposition of your tastes. Mortimer rises early, eager to be out in the morning air—you begin to enjoy life only toward afternoon. Mortimer likes an English lunch—you are miserable without a French breakfast. And so on, with a collection of insignificant details which are easily disposed of

To Mrs. Mortimer Cairesbrooke

when one has tact, and means sufficient to indulge the twofold whims of a similar household. But back of these trifling differences there is a moral suffering.

You chose Mortimer Cairesbrooke because you wanted to be his wife. Beautiful, courted, wealthy, and a belle as you were, Jane, you might have married any one of a dozen men when you accepted this one. Now you miss in him the man with whom you fell in love. What has become of this man? Is it Mortimer who has changed?

But to return to your letter.

Lately you have been housed with a sprained ankle, which has forced you to indulge your fondness for dwelling hours by the fire in your boudoir. It seems to you wrong to bore yourself. One cannot read forever. There is a man among your acquaintances with whom you enjoy talking. What harm can there be in merely exchanging ideas? This man is an Italian, a diplomat, a man of leisure, a man who understands and who has studied women!

Letters to Women in Love

It is agreeable to be with him for this reason, and harmless, since he is always devoting himself to not one but a lot of your fair friends. At first he came from time to time for a *causerie*, as he calls it, a chat with you on impersonal subjects. Then he came more often. Mortimer did not object, he was glad of anything that distracted you. He pitied you for being shut up as you were, and as he could not endure to be, even with you. At last, for one pretext or another, the visits of your Italian diplomat, which were casual in the beginning, are now made every day and at the same hour. When four has struck you find yourself waiting for a particular ring at the bell. When Signor Spinola has been announced you give word to the manservant that no one else is to be received.

All this is innocent you ask, isn't it? There is no harm in any one of these things? No, Jane, not in any one of them. There is no harm in slipping a brick from the corner stone of a dwelling. But if for weeks running you

To Mrs. Mortimer Cairesbrooke

remove one at a time these bricks, you shatter the foundations of a house and the security of its occupants.

Such a thing you do not wish to bring about. Doubtless you would not have written to me unless you wanted my advice to do what you at least approve. However, the fact that, in this affair, you should turn to anybody, shows a hesitancy which is the tacit avowal of an uneasy conscience.

This question with which your letter concludes is doubtless one that others have put to themselves before you. It reveals your inward perplexity.

Can a woman love two men at once?

“*Of course I love Mortimer,*” I can hear you protest before a doubt has been formulated into words upon my lips.

Shall I tell you, then, since you do love Mortimer why you are not content? Shall I tell you why, when Mortimer is the husband of your choice, the companion of your life, you feel a void in your existence which a stranger,

Letters to Women in Love

an Italian diplomat, who converses with you on literature and art, who appreciates your taste for reading and discussion, seems to fill?

You will cry out against me, I know. Never mind that, let me speak the truth. Jane, you are discontented because you do not make your husband happy! If a woman makes one man happy, truly happy, there will be no possibility of her loving two men, no such question permissible in her heart.

I ask you, when the first impulse of resentment against me for my injustice has worn away, to think over what I say. Then let me hear from you again, and I will, if you wish, explain myself further on the subject. In the meanwhile continue to see Spinola as before.

II

YOUR letter just received is startling. Generally, for one of my gray hairs, the emotions have long since been relegated to a part of the mind where everything appears as dimly as in the inverted reflections on the surface of a lake. With me this is not the case, as I was able to testify when I began to read your letter. A shudder ran over me. I finished you in haste, and had a second shock in re-reading you.

There is something intense, vital about love, in whatever form it presents itself to us. It is never a game or a pastime. Love is love, commonplace as this seems to you. When it is reduced to a spark in the midst of ashes it holds fire enough to consume in its flames a home, a town, a church, a world. Such is its power!

At first, in spite of myself, I contemplated your present coquetry with a smile of satis-

Letters to Women in Love

faction. I was prepared of course to give you good advice since it was this you asked for; but inwardly I was delighted that you should confide in me. I was glad to share, second-hand, the feelings of a woman in the midst of life. I was rejoiced at the glimpse you gave of your heart, a heart still tender, sensitive, impressionable. You cannot, at your age, realize with what anguish one can regret one's youthful heart! Growing old in fact is nothing more than this: leaving behind one the successive states of mind which one can never find again.

But it is not of growing old that I must write. I begin to see that you did not call upon me as an old friend to merely "talk things over." You are on the brink of a precipice. Perhaps you are more keenly aware of this than anyone. The hand you hold out to me is not exactly the welcoming hand of a hostess extended to a chance passerby! You lay hold of me, you cling to me in a way that is its own signal of the danger you are

To Mrs. Mortimer Cairesbrooke

in. I am gravely perplexed. If I am violent, you may go, startled, plunging into the abyss. A move too far might send you beyond recovery—do you wonder at my concern?

You asked me whether a woman could love two men at once. You don't love two men, my dear. You are beginning to grow detached from the man you ought to love, and you are beginning to love the man from whom you ought to grow detached.

I am not going to preach; you wouldn't listen to me. I beg you simply to call upon your own experience and observation.

Do you remember the "Uncle Jack" about whom you used to talk so much? Almost every womanly woman has had an "Uncle Jack" in her childish existence. Uncle Jack is a failure as yours was. He comes to the house when you are about seven years old, a very sentimental age. He arrives from some distant part of the West, and he is bound for a long sea voyage around Cape Horn, or the like. The preparations made to receive Uncle

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Jack differ from the usual making ready for a guest. There is a solemn air through the house. The older of the servants seem to have a special understanding about this relative. They whisper together in corners, nodding their heads. From one to the other you go, asking :

“ What does Uncle Jack do? Won’t he stay with us? Don’t you like him? ”

And the answers you receive find their way into that part of your womanly little heart where pity is stored, and a longing to comfort the desolate.

“ Uncle Jack has never succeeded at anything. He is weak, wild, dissipated. They are going to send him to sea for months, all alone, on a sailing vessel.”

Everybody is against Uncle Jack. You ask nothing more, but your decision is taken. At dinner, which you are allowed to eat with the grown-up people, you want him to notice you, you hope he will find your curls very golden, and your frock very fine. Meanwhile, you are

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thinking about the sailing vessel and the sea and Uncle Jack,—so many months all alone,—a failure. By and by, when dinner is over, you slip down from your chair, and presently you are standing by Uncle Jack, with both arms hugged close around him. You can feel him looking across the top of your head where your chin rests, and you believe in your heart that he is a little bit proud. What you want to say is:

“*I love you, Uncle Jack.*”

But you can’t speak because you are shy, and so you only look down at the black coat before you and tighten the clasp of your tiny arms.

Jane, dear, this was love. If there is one way above all others whereby we can recognize it, it is in this absence of criticism. If you love, you can’t, you mustn’t judge. Ask any woman who ever has loved, young or old, she will tell you the same thing.

Now suppose we apply this rule: *judge not*, to your present opinion of Mortimer.

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No one had a more definite idea than you, before you married, of what the ideal husband should be. When you picked out Mortimer Cairesbrooke you were sure he came up to your standard of the American man of to-day. You were delighted that he wasn't absorbed, as your father had been, in business. Your chief recollections of your father were a Sunday morning vision of newspapers from which emerged above, a cloud of cigar smoke, and below, a pair of polished boots. Your friends were like you. I remember, and you must, too, how struck you were when we first went to England, by the number of English gentlemen who had "nothing to do," and who could go around with their wives in the daytime and have the same interests and occupations?

In Mortimer the thing that attracted you was his resemblance, in the matter of leisure and culture, to Englishmen. As you put it proudly: "Mortimer has sat more hours in the saddle than on a school bench or on an office stool."

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Mortimer didn't make any mystery about his likes and dislikes. You can't accuse him of that. He very justly considered his sporting capacities as most likely to attract you. He knew you were proud to have him master of the hounds, the best whip in New York, and the rest.

What has happened then to change this? Are you jealous of his hobbies? No! You cannot advance this even as a pretext. You didn't honestly expect him to give up sport when you married in order to devote himself solely to you?

This would have worn on your nerves more quickly than anything else. His very sacrifice (as is always the case when two are sacrificed and neither gets what he wants) would have irritated you.

What is it then you want which Mortimer does not give? Shall I tell you what I think? You want a good excuse for being discontented with your husband. You reproach him with getting up early in the morning to go

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hunting. You would reproach him if he got up late because he had spent the night in reading. The very sight of his riding things rasps you. His hunting stories bore you, it is all you can do to listen to them. Forgive me such frankness, dear; you will think I am going too far. I should not have volunteered these remarks if you had not appealed to me. I have watched you often when I have been visiting you. Poor Mortimer! His eyes seek yours for a glance of approval, and his expression is almost guilty when he doesn't receive it.

But a pretext for being discontented is not enough. You go further. You want the right to complain. You have tried unconsciously to get your friends to share in your disapproval,—disapproval is too strong,—in your dissatisfaction. As though Mortimer were dull, self-absorbed, a husband who did nothing to make his wife happy and who couldn't deserve to be loved by her.

This is what alarmed me when I read your

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letter: it seemed as though you were seeking to persuade me that Mortimer no longer really cared for you! That it was almost too much to expect you should go on loving him.

As to the other danger threatening you, insidious and keen, given your state of mind, I will write more another day. Suffice it for the present to signal the abyss which yawns at your right hand, without considering the precipice at your left!

III

YOU answered my letter before I had time even to continue the development of my "judge not" theory! Your haste in responding is indicative. Unconsciously what you say takes the form of a protestation. My dear Jane, *qui s'excuse s'accuse*. Why need you protest? What to me could be more convicting than all you tell me of Signor Spinola?

The very manner in which you describe his personal appearance (I have before me the picture of Mortimer) is a proof of the direction your "indulgence" has taken. Spinola, you say, is tall, with the grace of a man whose muscles are part of his heredity and not (I see Mortimer on horseback) the ordinary flesh toughened by a single generation of riding.

Spinola wears a mustache. (I perceive Mortimer's clear-cut, smooth-shaven features.)

Spinola speaks English not only with the

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most alluring accent, but he chooses his words in a manner that gives them a new meaning. . . . He has a subtle sense of humor, but he never laughs out loud. (I can hear Mortimer's boisterous outbursts of merriment.)

I need hardly continue; you remember your own descriptions. Does it not occur to you that you have answered my command: *judge not?* Your indulgence, if misapplied, is at all events flawless.

But, you ask, as though you had foreseen my innermost thoughts, why *should* you judge Spinola? You are in no way responsible for him, nor he for you. You have been able to remain with him in the agreeable realm of impersonalities where both are at your best. Voltaire's advice to the human is what you have applied in your methods of proceeding with this Italian friend: "*Glissez mortel, n'appuyez jamais!*"

In your conversations there is none of that tragic entering into details which makes any intercourse (I remember Mortimer's love of

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the practical) monotonous and trying to the nerves. Moreover, by a chance for which no one is responsible, it happens that what Spinola does interests you! He is in close touch with the very questions that have always fascinated you.

Two things I grant you, dear.

First, that no two people are happy together unless they have a mutual appreciation of each other. In the daily intercourse which marriage presupposes there is no demand so imperative as this desire to be appreciated. It is a necessity in the human heart. The soul remains, as it were, a tramp among souls until it has found appreciation of its qualities, its limitations, its defects, its possibilities. Now nothing is so useless as an object that nobody needs. However a log of wood, for example, may cheer the hearth with its flames in December, in July it becomes a dire encumbrance. So it is with the "unneeded" in marriage. The endowments of certain husbands and certain wives might, in another union, be of

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inestimable value. But how often do we see marital combinations wherein it seems that one temperament is as superfluous to the other as fuel to the August, torrid sunshine.

This dissimilitude or inaptness of couples (mind you I admit it exists only to show you I am not one-sided and that what I state may have some weight) brings me to the second of my concessions regarding the eternal man-and-woman problem. Balzac has expressed what I mean: "To be happy with one you love," he says, "you must have opposite characters and identical tastes."

You will respond—I can hear you—that this is exactly the case with Spinola and yourself: no two people could be more different, yet he absolutely understands you. Sometimes a glance, a gesture suffices without a word being spoken. And your comprehension of him is the same as his of you. He appeals to you as you are sure he has never done to any woman. He consults you, he wants your advice. He tells you the secrets of State—the

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most flattering homage and proof of confidence a diplomat could bestow upon a woman. This naturally attracts you to him.

After he has left you, you continue to reflect upon what he has said. You begin at once to think of new things you want to tell him, to discuss with him, to hear him talk about. The intervals between your daily encounters are but a preparation of yourself to meet this man again. I know your state of mind as well as anyone. Each incident in your life is measured and judged, retained in your memory or relegated to forgetfulness, according as you feel or do not feel that it would interest Spinola.

Can you tell me this is not true?

Spinola is not a hero. He is the man excelling in small things. I can fancy you a dozen times while you are with him saying: "That's another thing Mortimer would never have thought of."

It has perhaps not tempted you to compare Spinola's idea of you with that of Mortimer

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on the same subject. You have never tried to realize what Mortimer wants you to be and what the other would like to have you.

The very multiple attentions with which this Italian surrounds you are so many inducements for you to follow the "gentle slope" which leads—under the name of happiness—to self-destruction. It is on a pedestal that Mortimer has placed you like a goddess, inaccessible. It is thus that you please him, as the unattainable, beyond him and above.

And Spinola? When he has undermined the pedestal? Will not the goddess lie in the dust at his feet?

"No!" you protest. "How could you think of such a thing?"

Reflect a little. Does not your indulgence go so far as to enlist for Spinola the sympathy of others?

Without penetrating into the pleasant half tones of your boudoir, familiar enough to me, I can fancy that I perceive from here more than one mark of your friend's attentions. On

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the mantelpiece is the photograph of some scientific celebrity about whom all Europe is talking. Spinola has brought it to you, and you have placed it *en evidence* as a pretext for mentioning, not the gift, but the giver. By your side, left carelessly on the table, is the manuscript of a new French play confided to you by your Italian admirer. In the window blooms a new variety of *Bougainvillæa* brought from Egypt to the embassy and transferred at once to your keeping. Am I right?

More than the presence of the flowers themselves you feel the influence of the man who is not there, who pleases you, and whom you please. If it gratifies you thus to surround yourself with the gifts he has made you, it is evident,—alas! dear,—it is evident that what you feel is more than a trifling sentiment. That you should wish to arouse in his behalf the interest, the curiosity, the enthusiasm of others; doesn't this mean that you love him? Jane, answer me!

IV

YOU may perhaps have heard of a certain form of torture known as the inquisition. It was applied to people from whom they wished, in the Middle Ages, to extort a confession. The inquisitioner was pitiless. He thought it was his duty to turn the screw until he had wrung from the most patient a cry which he was determined must spring from his very entrails.

Heaven forgive them! There were even among the Spanish, inquisitors who believed that they gave a proof of affection for their fellow men by binding them to the rack.

In a measure I have followed the example of these torturers. My last letter was tormenting, excruciating. I forced you to hold out your hand above the flames of your dawning passion. I made you keep it there. I would not let you withdraw it even when you had become painfully aware of the fact that

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it was really fire, and that this fire was live enough to burn.

Tell me, Jane, when you were a small child just beginning to walk, didn't your nurse employ this Spencerian method to keep you from going too near the logs that glowed on the hearth? Weren't you given a practical demonstration of the danger of playing with matches?

My excuse, dear, is that my intentions, like those of the inquisitors and of your nurse, were good (you will say, perhaps, that it is with such intentions that hell is paved?). If I did hurt you ever so little it was only with the hope of wringing a cry from you—the cry of delivery, of relief, the outburst of indignation which concludes your last letter: “I *will* love my husband!”

Did you hear that, Spinola? She wants to, she *will* love her husband, and her husband only. This is her right, I suppose? And her duty as well, perhaps?

The celebrated scientist whose photograph

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is on her mantelpiece proves it. The author of the new French play which is on her table now, proves it, too. He has written so many stories of women whose whole misery came from not loving their husbands. I, her old friend, I feel like embracing her! Not because I had lost faith in her, but because I realize that she needs all the courage she can command to say to her manservant:

“To-day I shall not be at home for anybody.”

“Not even for Mr. Spinola?”

“Not even for Mr. Spinola!”

Poor Jane! It is I who come in Spinola's place to-day to pay you a visit.

So what you wrote me is: “I *will* love my husband!” It is all very well to have a will. That's a little specialty of our compatriots. But love is not altogether dependent upon the will. What I mean is this: A woman might succeed by force of will in destroying the love of which she was ashamed, but she could not by the same force of will engender

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for another man a love which did not exist in her heart.

I can fancy the expression of discouragement which traverses your face as you read this. The same expression which sick people have when they look at the doctors who say wise things about their diseases, who are very clever in defining causes and in predicting results, but who don't frankly declare:

“I am going to give you the very thing which will make you a well woman.”

Who knows better than you that love is the victim of fate, of chance? When you asked me in your first letter if you could love two men at once, you practically confessed to me that this chance was extinguishing one love in your heart, and that it was forcing another upon you.

“The remedy—the remedy?”

Have patience! There is a remedy. But I warn you it is not a mere remedy, not an extraordinary patent medicine which quiets pain like a charm. It is a treatment, slow,

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thorough. You must bring to bear faith, patience, and great gentleness. What you ought to do is to accept everything I suggest without discussion. You should carry out all my prescriptions with blind faith.

“But would I be cured in the end?” you ask.

Cured forever! Permanently cured, Jane. I don’t pretend that you would be out of all danger of a relapse. I simply claim that henceforth, without my precious aid, you could attend to your own case, whether it were Spinola or some other young diplomat who provoked new symptoms.

Now, like all magicians, it only remains for me to demand your word of honor that you are going to abandon yourself to me with absolute trust. This is the condition which I impose before divulging my secret. You must not question the necessity for being mysterious. All the great healers of moral or physical sufferings insist upon mystery. If I were to say to you now what I want you

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to do, perhaps you would shrug your shoulders and your chance of being cured would escape you.

When you have thought the matter over for a night, write to me with perfect simplicity:

“I will do as you say.”

Already you will be on the highway to recovery.

V

YOUR response has come. I read between the lines; your submission to me is only half-hearted. It is the consent of the mind. What I had hoped for was a promise from the heart. Your tone is argumentative. You say:

“What? You advise me to love my husband, and in the same breath you tell me that love is madness? Then it is madness you counsel me as the solution of my difficulties?”

This does, perhaps, I admit, need explaining. In the first place how do you define happiness? Pascal called it “*le divertissement*”—not as we mean “diversion” in the frivolous sense, but rather as distraction from oneself, from the *ego*. This is as good a definition as any I know, yet I always want to add something to it. Happiness, it seems to me, is of two sorts: Contentment, which means the forgetting of oneself; passion,

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which means the forgetting of others. Under the first head come all those who in happiness neither rise to the summits nor sink to the depths. In the second category are the extremists: geniuses, sisters of charity, drunkards, and lovers.

I suppose you wonder in which category I put you? You are wavering between the two, and, like all those who have not firmly decided whether their part in life will be to forget themselves or to forget others, you are miserable.

I want you to forget yourself. I long to enlist you among the army of the "contented." There is something *bourgeois* and middle-class in the very word, you think. Yet how often do you see a contented woman? Is there anything really more unusual? Judged by its rarity and its difficulty of attainment, doesn't feminine contentment appear as a masterpiece of art?

It is in this light that I hope it will appeal to you. I don't ask you to pose, nor to im-

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pose. It is useless for you to affect happiness, and it is time wasted for you to make a martyr of yourself in the endeavor to be content.

I go back to the statement made in my first letter: if you want Mortimer to make you happy, you must begin by making him happy. I have seen husbands madly in love, overwhelming their wives with attention, tenderness, and generosity, while they and their wives were both fairly miserable.

Why? Because the woman can't be happy in marriage, no matter how adored she is, unless she begins by making happy her husband. It's a thankless task, you think? I go so far as to affirm that any woman who makes her husband happy will be happy with him, no matter what sort he is. What can be a more constant and legitimate reproach than a cheerless husband? No matter how far our modern education may have perverted us women, the instinct of our marrow is to console, comfort, please, and cherish the man.

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When we fail in this, however gratified our pride may be at our emancipation, there is a revolt of nature in us, because—and nothing is more wearing—we are missing our destiny.

Of course, it's "not so easy" as it seems, and especially it is difficult to make over yourself and your married life when you have both fallen into a habit of dullness toward each other, when you are "neither unhappy nor happy," when you have accepted a monotonous situation as though there were nothing to be "done about it." Let me tell you from my own experience, that in marriage there is something to be "done about it" all the time, every minute of the day!

Love in the superficial form (don't be offended with me) is a bouquet; it perfumes the air about us to-day, and has no to-morrow. But marriage, dear, is like a garden; it must be cared for, refreshed, and watched over if we wish it to thrive; it must be constantly weeded if we don't want it to stifle.

How do you know that Mortimer isn't

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suffering? How do you know that, if riding were a passion with him when he married you, it is not a consolation now? How do you know that his deceptions are not as keen as yours?

You told me in one of your letters how instinctively Spinola did certain things which gave you pleasure, and you conclude that love needs to be taught nothing. No, perhaps not the sort of love that makes the bouquet, that cuts all its blossoms ruthlessly and offers them regardless except of their immediate sweetness. But the other love, the growing love, must be trained like a vine. It has everything to learn.

What confidence in himself do you encourage in Mortimer? What response, what support does he find in you? What, in a word, do you know of him?

The unfortunate side of our Puritan training is, that for generations we have cultivated the Will at the expense of the Sensibilities. This has made us a nation of deeds, not of

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words; of activity, not of expression. Our New England motto might be: "I can do it, but I can't explain it."

You conclude that because Mortimer isn't expansive, he can't be sensitive. That, if he says anything, he feels little. You know what his pleasures are and how keen, and you know that he seldom converses about them. Has it occurred to you that he has sufferings equally keen and of which he also never speaks? There is nothing sadder than a man who cannot share his perplexities, his disappointments, and his sorrows. Mortimer's sensibility is only sleeping under the tombstone of Puritanism. Rouse it while there is time!

Do you not know the definition of the word sympathy? It means "to suffer together." The first conquest for you to make is one of Mortimer's sympathy. This sharing of emotions will be the strongest tie that can bind you together.

Here then is my mystic recipe, reduced to the triteness of an aphorism:

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- I. Study Mortimer, understand him, and you will understand his feelings.
- II. Consider his feelings, and you will make him happy.
- III. Make him happy, and you will be happy yourself!

VI

ONE, two, three mails have gone by—no letter from you has come. I have hung out of the window waiting for the postman to pass. I have questioned the maid, sure she must have dropped a letter on the stairway. She assures me there was nothing, and nothing there is, for you haven't written me. But that is no reason why I should not answer you. I say "answer," for silence is an answer; sometimes the most eloquent of all.

This letter which you haven't written, I will write it now—so prepare for the worst! No, not so bad as that. We will take it out in conversing together. We will "talk it out," as they say. You agree? Well, then, to begin with, I come to call upon you. You are seated in a dimly lighted corner of your drawing-room. At a glance I perceive that you are not reading, you are pouting! Being well brought

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up you rise and come forward to meet me, but your smile is somewhat constrained. You offer me tea, soda, hot and cold drinks. Very tactfully I notice you try to postpone the evil moment when we "come to the point."

There is a certain privilege due my gray hair. Heedless of your bad humor (not as becoming as your usual gayety), and nothing daunted, I plunge headlong into the subject that interests us both.

"So you are angry with me, Jane?"

"Why should I be angry?"

"Because, like all people who ask advice, you wanted me to divine your innermost desire and recommend it to you as the only course of action. As a matter of fact I did exactly the opposite."

"You thought I wanted you to advise me to leave my husband without remorse? Ruthlessly?"

"No. You wanted me to tell you that it was Mortimer who was forcing you to leave him."

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“Instead of which it appears that Mortimer is the most amiable man in the world——”

“Go on!”

“The most charming husband, the ideal lover. And I? I must be a monster to have grown cold or indifferent to such a perfect *compagnon*!”

“Have you finished?”

“Isn’t that enough? I should think it was!”

“Undeniably it is! Unfortunately, though, I never said a word of all that, and I never pretended that your husband was the ideal type. I only remarked that you ought to be the ideal wife.”

“That I ought to make all the effort.”

“Certainly.”

“Give up all my own tastes and adopt his instead.”

“I didn’t ask you to do quite that.”

“Ride horseback every day, live in the stable, practice high-jumping, risk breaking my neck, and be so exhausted every night that

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I couldn't even open a book after dinner, or go to the theater, or talk with a man who happened to be able to talk."

"Spinola, for example."

"Spinola or anybody else. What has he done that you should have such a grudge against him? You don't know him, and you are prejudiced about him simply because he is devoted to me."

"I am prejudiced against him because what I say is black he says is white. Do you suppose I don't, from here, perceive Spinola shrugging his shoulders at my remarks? I am sure that less than an hour ago he was here with you, in the very chair where I am sitting. I don't ask you to affirm or deny. Of course, you didn't tell him that you had written to me about him, nor that I had answered you. But as you needed fortifying in order to resist me more efficaciously, you called on him for aid. In such cases women are very wily, especially those in love. You did not put the problem to Spinola as though

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it regarded you and him and Mortimer. You suggested a general discussion on the subject after this manner :

“ Signor Spinola, you come from a country where love is the all-important thing. Now if an Italian woman were married to a man so indifferent to her that he talked more of his horses than of her, do you suppose that she would have to give up all her own tastes, and encourage only her husband’s hobbies? Would she expect to have only a little place between his morning hunt and his afternoon ride? ”

Naturally I can hear Spinola answer :

“ The modern woman, all the world over, has dispensed with tyrants. The self-respect which women consider they owe themselves to-day, the duties they feel incumbent upon them, do not permit them to immolate themselves completely, nor to sacrifice their intelligence and personality to a brute who doesn’t realize the value of the jewel he possesses. The unappreciated jewel has but two things

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to do: shut itself up in its case, and fade there like an opal that loses its luster, or else display itself to the admiration of the connoisseur who knows the real price of the pearl, and how its preciousness should be adored!"

This response pleased you more than my sermons. You decided at once that you were the pearl, that Spinola was the connoisseur of rare jewels. Poor Mortimer! His chances of finding happiness dropped as rapidly as Oriental securities at the rumor of war.

You were expecting me to say: Alas, poor Mortimer! What I really say, and from the bottom of my heart, is: Alas, poor Jane!

VII

BRAVO, Jane! Your husband would say that you were thoroughbred. You may hesitate an instant at the foot of the obstacle, but you go over the hurdle, your eyes shut. I have your word for it, your sacred word, that you are going to try to make Mortimer happy and to understand him. You assure me this with all your heart, and I don't doubt you, for through this whole affair you have been as stanch as a man.

Do I need to tell you that I am overjoyed? You imagine it without my insisting. It is not my personal pride as an old adviser which says: "I have forced her into obedience." It is my almost maternal gray-haired tenderness that wants to see happy, a woman as charming as you are.

VIII

WHEN you read the lives of the saints you see that they don't attain heaven the first time trying for it. It would seem as though Providence, who realizes what the strength of their souls may be, wanted to give them especial chances for cultivating their exceptional merits. I have a notion that this same Providence is treating you in like manner. It is multiplying the difficulties on your way.

I refuse to see that your letter ends with a word of discouragement. I am sure you are regretting it already, and that you have begun over again. I mean that you have not let yourself become disheartened because of the astonishment with which Mortimer received your advances. You are going to persist as though the rôles had changed, as though Mortimer were the most capricious and spoiled of

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women, and you the boldest and most ardent of husbands!

From here I can see the scene, or rather the scenes, of this little act, the first in the play, just as they transpired. I find this comparison with a play a good one. You have noticed probably that when the playwright knows his business, things go very badly in the first act, and very well at the end of the piece, when the curtain drops. It will be the same with you, if you do your part well.

So,—it had been raining all day long, and Mortimer had come in drenched through. You had become as anxious about him as though he were a child. You went up to his room and prepared in advance all the dry things he was sure to need. When he came in at last, dripping like a sponge, you sent word that you were waiting for him in your *boudoir*; that you had hot drinks ready for him; a fire, and so on. You waited for him until dinner was ready. He went, as soon as he had changed his clothes, straight to the stables, and

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as he had mounted his favorite mare that day, he stopped to see her wiped down. He didn't leave her until she was comfortably bundled up with a blanket on her back and flannel bandages around her hocks! Meanwhile the hot drinks in the *boudoir* were growing colder and colder.

When at last he came down for dinner he did not have on the clothes you had got ready for him. He had put on others. He didn't grasp the fact—you had not left your card on him—that you had been up to his room, and that you had taken a lot of trouble and been worried on his account.

You were inclined to listen very patiently to his stories about the mishaps of the day. But he let the first half of the meal go by without saying a word. He was hungry! You couldn't blame him. But you, who had other thoughts than eating, you found him a little vulgar with his enormous appetite.

Finally he deigned to speak, and what did he say? He said:

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“It’s a long time since we’ve had Spinola to dinner. I like Spinola. He always has something to say for himself. Why don’t you ask him any more? It would liven us up a bit. Three heads are better than two.”

This time it did seem that Mortimer was a trifle opaque, that he was perfectly indifferent even. To be sure if he were in love with you himself, you argued, he would have perceived what Spinola’s feelings for you were. He would have tried to keep him away from you, instead of inviting you to see more than ever of him. Love, true love, you protested to yourself, can’t exist without jealousy.

The end of your evening was more pitiful than the beginning. You proposed to your husband, when he had taken his seat as usual in the corner by the fire, comfortably installed with his whisky and soda, that you read him an article from some English magazine on the way American jockeys ride, the advantages and utility of their methods, and the criticisms they have excited in Europe.

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Mortimer seemed perfectly amazed. He said: "But this will bore you to death, Jane." You answered with a mysterious smile: "No—not at all, if it interests you."

Then he opened his eyes wide upon you, which did not prevent his shutting them again five minutes after. You turned your back to him, and you kept on reading in your dear, gentle voice (which I know so well, and which Spinola has complimented you on when you have read certain passages to him in the English poets). All of a sudden you heard a regular, rhythmic sound, the meaning of which was only too clear. You turned around as though a serpent had stung you. There was no room for doubt, Mortimer was asleep.

This time you were at the end of your patience. You threw the magazine on the ground. You swept out of the *boudoir* like a tragedy queen, you rushed up to your room, you slammed the door, locked it. You fell into the chair by your toilet table and you sobbed—not tears of tenderness, but tears of anger, of

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rage. They were still glistening in your eyes when you perceived that there, in full sight before you, your maid had placed a note which had just been left for you from Spinola. It was the very note which you had looked for and which you had not received during the day. He pretended that he thought you were ill. He made solicitous inquiries, with his melodious Italian words, as to how you were.

And your letter to me ends with a pathetic appeal. You have done your best. You have given Mortimer his chance. He has not taken advantage of it.

You had to work your anger off on some one, so you fixed on me. I prefer this to hearing you say: "I answered Spinola that he might come the next day."

It is true, isn't it, that you didn't open the window wide to let in the sound of his enticing serenade?

IX

YOUR telegram reassures me. In the conventional ten words you tell me what I wanted to know: "*Of course I did not see 'him' the next day.*"

I rather hoped this morning for a letter, but seeing that none has come, I take no news to be good news, and I send a few lines to fortify you in the conquest of the unconscious Mortimer.

I remember the story told by Henry M. Stanley about his expedition across Africa, in the face of the most terrible dangers and difficulties, to rescue Emin Pacha. When finally, with his men, he reached the spot where the illustrious German and his followers had been for several years "lost," the two parties exchanged greetings, and the following conversation ensued between the chiefs:

Emin Pacha (constrained). "Delighted to

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see you, my dear Stanley, but what, may I ask, have you come for?"

Stanley (majestic). "To rescue you, Pacha."

Emin Pacha (peevish). "But I didn't want to be rescued!"

We can fancy Mortimer somewhat in the position of the Pacha. But you are perfectly right to persist, there are so many different sorts of love, and such a variety of ways for loving. "If at first you don't succeed——"

Remember that this new solicitude on your part is as strange to Mortimer as it is to you. Nothing could be more natural than that a wife should occupy herself about her husband while awaiting his return when he is absent from the house in a drenching rain. Nothing could be more normal than for one of the couple to read aloud to the other after dinner. You felt, however, that what you were doing the other day was quite extraordinary, almost a sacrifice. And poor darling Mortimer was lulled to slumber by the unaccustomed atten-

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tion. So it is when the mind makes any unwonted exertion!

No, but joking aside, what you have done so far is hardly worth mentioning, and such, probably, the husband found it. You must go further than the mere upsetting of Mortimer's habits! You must, as I wrote you before, enter into his feelings and consider them to the exclusion of your own.

The scales in whose cups are placed two human hearts never swing quite even. So it is with love. There are attachments that last for years wherein each one loves, not on his own account, but because the other loves. Now one, now the other is indifferent. Now one, now the other is ardent, and so they go on, simply because it has never chanced that they were both indifferent on the same day, at the same hour!

It is only in the *grandes passions* that the love of one persists in spite even of another's hostility or *nonchalance*.

But there are couples, Jane, like you and

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Mortimer, whose emotional scales have long since ceased entirely their pretty fluctuations.

Believe me, this immobility is fatal. Movement is life, and it is life that attracts us. See how far more each day the world becomes a moving world; what seduction rapidity has for us; how we have gone on in the material realm, for example, from the ordinary photograph to the moving cinematographic picture, from the ordinary telegraph to the moving wireless message. Watch the fascination over a crowd of a flashlight, a machine in motion. Notice even the almost tender interest displayed in the disabled automobile by the mere passerby, who stands by concernedly and wants to "see it go again."

Love must be animate, dear, to attract us. It were better to suffer keenly than to feel nothing. This seems a strange counsel to give, that you should enliven your sentiments by pain. But have you not noticed how *alive* we are in mental distress. An hour's misery quickens the thoughts. They turn as though

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starved for something to feed upon, bringing under their closest scrutiny what before they had languidly contemplated.

Somebody has said that in love there is always one who loves the most. Were we to judge by the simpler manifestations we see among humble, rustic couples we could form certain general rules. When, on a holiday, we study these popular lovers setting forth for Glen Island or a river excursion, it is always the young man, we perceive, who appears the more solicitous of the two. On the homeward trip the tables are reversed; it is the girl who is preoccupied with fixing the attention of her young gallant. But between the day's ends there is an hour midway when they both seem more or less tired of each other, threatening to drift toward listless boredom.

This is the rock of shipwrecks! Steer clear of it, dear. Don't let poor Mortimer alone. Don't leave him in peace where he has been already too long.

In love, as in life, to grow old is to lose

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one's enthusiasm. How many young loves have a premature old age!

Stir up poor Mortimer, to rage if necessary, to suffering if need be. Agitate him! It is the sterility of indifference which disgusts us. I fancy that a thundering anger on Mortimer's part, a violent outburst against anything you had done, would give you more hope than you have had in a long time. Where there is hope, Jane, there is life. So, I beg of you, let there be life in your love.

X

MY last letter was rather melancholy, I admit. To-day I hardly know how to write. I had been "letting myself go," as it were, on the supposition that you were telling me everything. Now, from your epistle of yesterday, I find that there was a whole realm in this affair which you had not disclosed.

So you were jealous of Miss Wynkoop? And you could not help showing it to Spinola? Miss Wynkoop is an adorable young *débutante*, this I admit. It would be quite natural for Spinola, or any other bachelor, to lose his heart to such a pretty girl (and especially one whose grace and charm are substantialized by so considerable a fortune).

But, after all, it did seem rather absurd for you, in the position you hold, to allow yourself to be jealous. You thought that Spinola

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wanted to marry Miss Wynkoop, and this rankled. What more feminine?

Was the cause of your jealousy so well founded as you think? Spinola used always to dance with Miss Wynkoop several times—and even sit out an occasional quadrille—at the winter balls. Is this very marked devotion from a worldly diplomat to a *débutante*?

I fancy you rather enjoy exaggerating the devotion of Spinola to this rival, so that you can better appreciate the sacrifice he has made for you.

Spinola was invited to accompany the Wynkoops on their private car, with a party, over to the Hot Springs. A delightful opportunity indeed for one in love to pay court to the object of his devotions?

But did Spinola take advantage of it? Not at all! He refused the Wynkoops' invitation peremptorily. Why? Because he wanted to remain in Washington where you were, where he could see you every afternoon, have news of

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you twice a day, devote himself to you as his heart dictates.

Ah! There is nothing to be said as to the quality of such an ardor! Indeed, I can see, Jane, that this sacrifice on his part has made, if I may so express it, inroads upon your emotions, upon your ways of looking at things, upon your powers of resistance. You say to yourself: "Spinola has done this for me, and I do nothing for him. I don't even show him how much touched I am." And you are touched. When he comes as usual, at four, there is something rather grandiose, almost tragic, in his manner.

Jane, take care. It is at the brink of the precipice that one is most intoxicated with the danger. It is a sensation, this tipsiness, between pain and pleasure: it is illusive, indefinable, imperative, irresistible.

No acts are so thoroughly delicious as those we accomplish heedless of consequences. All the economies of goodness we have made in a lifetime are squandered as sump-

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tuously as though a miser were to empty his coffers into the river for the pleasure of seeing the waters run golden for a moment as they pass.

And keen as our regret may be to see a fortune vanish in this way, there is an instinctive reconciliation on our part with the miser! Recklessness always inspires a first movement of admiration. Second thoughts are less favorable, especially if we have been frightened. Fear, when the cause for fear is passed, causes irritability.

But I hope you are not going to inspire any of these feelings in me. Already you have gone too far. Spinola, you tell me yourself, since he has thrown over this Wynkoop affair, is gaining more and more power over you. Yesterday you quite lost your head with him. You realize now that as you talked, again and again he took your hands. You let them remain in his. He touched them with his lips. You did not withdraw them:

The more you yield to a man who loves you

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the happier you will be at the time, and the more you will afterward have to regret.

If your vanity seeks consolation when you think of sacrificing this affair, remember the *amantes célèbres* of whom the world has talked. What gave them their distinction, their title to celebrity? Their rôle as *amoureuses*, as women in love? Not at all. All women, some one has said, are beautiful when they love. But those who have passed on from beauty to the heights of heroism and lasting fame in their sentimental attachments were one and all separated from the objects of their passion, either willfully or through force of circumstances. It was from the convent where Héloïse had withdrawn that she wrote her exquisitely plaintive missives to Abelard. And so with Mademoiselle de Condé, with Julie de Lespinasse, with Mademoiselle de la Vallière; their liaisons would have remained for us *banal* if separation had not given to them that poignant note which finds in every heart an echo.

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I hardly place you, dear, in the category with these women of bygone days. I only recommend you in any case to break off this affair with Spinola. If really you love him, separation is the only thing which can ennable this sentiment.

And if you don't love him . . . !

XI

WHAT a good joke! We had the same inspiration at the same moment. I came over to Washington to take you by surprise, and Mortimer tells me that you have gone to Baltimore. To see me, of course. Is this true? Answer by telegram. I shall wait for you here.

XII

YOU are showing the true American spirit! Loyalty, you know, like virtue, is its own reward. I needn't insist further upon the risks you have been incurring. Convinced, no doubt, that discretion was the better part of valor, you have taken it upon yourself to run away. You may rush headlong to victory or you may obtain it by turning your back peremptorily on the enemy and escaping with your hands over your ears. In your opinion you have fled from a man who loved you and who could perhaps give you happiness. To my thinking you have got away just in time from a dangerous adversary.

Profiting by your absence, I have made inquiries. I have questioned Mortimer. I have got all the news without leaving the house. Your various friends have called on me, add-

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ing each a spicy bit about Spinola's performances.

But, first of all, let me tell you that your husband is not so absorbed as you think with his favorite mare. He has a few other ideas in his head beside cross-country riding and Irish hunters. For the past six months you have been giving him no end of anxiety! If you have not suspected this, it is because your thoughts have been otherwise occupied. Love is wonderfully democratic: it makes us all just alike. It is characteristic of lovers to suppose themselves enveloped in a cloud, and as invisible to others as others are to them.

Last night after dinner Mortimer talked with me very frankly. We were alone. I don't know whether he had been riding horseback that day. He seemed, anyway, to show no desire for sleep!

The fact is you were the subject of our conversation.

He divides your case into three periods. The first, during which he was disconsolate

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to see that you became more and more indifferent, taking no interest in him, nor in anything else. You no longer opened your piano, your books did not have the leaves even cut. You accepted invitations, and you did not go out when the time came. He watched you during this period with eyes in which you did not discern the sadness, and he concluded :

“ I’m not the one, evidently, who can rouse Jane to take an interest in life.”

At this juncture (the second period), Spinnola made his appearance in your life. Mortimer is very just in rendering homage to all his good points. He said to me in the most humble way :

“ What a pity that we American men, who love so tremendously, don’t know how to please as well as these young Italian tenors.”

Mortimer was not thinking of himself all this time; he was preoccupied about you. He noticed that, little by little, you were beginning again to occupy yourself about a lot of

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things which had ceased to appeal to you. Laughing, he said :

“ She was no longer indifferent. Her indifference had gradually changed into ill-humor. When I came back after ‘ they ’ had been together all afternoon she was quite cross with me.”

I don’t need to assure you that he had not the slightest suspicion of jealousy. He said to me :

“ I couldn’t have a keener sorrow than to think that something is lacking in Jane’s happiness. Everything I can give her myself, I do. I would go to the ends of the world for her. But that sort of ease in conversing, that witty foreign gift of jumping from one subject to another, so amusing to women, are not to be bought, you can’t purchase them at any price, and I am totally lacking in them.”

So, my dear Jane, as long as Mortimer thought that you simply needed something to enliven you, and that Spinola brought you this “ something,” he effaced himself with a tender

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abnegation whose depths were all unselfishness. But when he began to see (period number three) that in order to be happy it was not "something" you wanted, but "some one," and that this "some one" was Spinola, then he could not help suffering.

"I did not know," he said to me, "how to treat the jealousy that I felt rising up in me. I tried to crush it out on the road with my horse's hoofs, to drown it in rain storms. In vain. All had become a reason for suspecting her, everything; even the change of mood in Jane lately, when she got all of a sudden so amiable to me. I don't care for the theater, because the air suffocates me; but I have seen enough modern comedies over Jane's shoulders to know that when the right kind of a woman begins to grow away from her husband she is always seized with remorse, and that this remorse is often expressed by an especial devotion to the poor man who is to be sacrificed!"

My dear Jane, your husband has never at

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any moment lost faith in you. He is worthy of all the affection you can feel for him, and you would, I believe, have been touched to the very heart if you had seen the distress with which he asked me;

“ Her leaving so suddenly for Baltimore was on his account, wasn’t it? Do tell me all you know about the affair! Help me to help her. I don’t want her to suffer as I am suffering.”

One doesn’t need a reward when one has tried to do good to those one loves. Yet I had my recompense, sufficient, when I could answer him:

“ Mortimer, Jane’s loyalty is better even than you think it. From the moment she felt the sort of charm which you recognize that Spinola exerts, she was on her guard. She wrote to tell me of it. She asked my advice. She followed it. I can answer for her to-day as though she were here herself.”

I went on, seeing how eagerly he listened:

“ Do you remember that evening when you came in wet through and through? When you

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went up to your room you found your dry things waiting for you, and you didn't put on the clothes that had been got ready? Do you know who it was that took such tender precaution for you?"

He answered: "My valet, I suppose. I was rather stunned at his unusual solicitude."

"Well, it wasn't your valet who had done it. It was Jane."

"Jane?"

If you had heard the sound of his voice, and the tone with which he pronounced your name! There was everything in that "Jane." Persistent love for you, melancholy which was beginning to see light, remorse that he had been so stupid and obtuse.

Dear, if he should find that "Jane" again to welcome you back from Baltimore you would fall into his arms, and I would have no more fear of ever seeing another Spinola rise up as a menace to your happiness.

I say "another Spinola," for of the old one I fancy there will be no further question.

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Here is his story as it was told to me, and as perhaps some of your charitable friends may have told it to you. But this will be for my next! I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that once at least my letter will be awaited with eager expectation.

XIII

DON'T suppose I am going to tell you that Spinola never cared for you.

You are quite charming enough to have turned his head, and he was very naturally attracted to you. He found in you an intelligent, agreeable companion, a woman who, far more than the average, had studied, traveled, read, and taken an interest in the big things to which our sex are sometimes indifferent.

Spinola, however, whatever the power you may have exerted over him, belongs to the category of men whose heads are never completely turned. For him, as for all foreigners of the Latin race, the "great affair" in life is a suitable marriage. A "*mariage de convenance*" which brings money, luxury, acquaintances; which, in a word, promises shelter in old age for one whose youth has been

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fairly well given over to the pleasures of existence.

A married woman, for a sly calculator of this sort, does not present the same attraction as a young girl. (You know how little it is the custom to divorce in Catholic countries, and how impossible remarriage is for the *divorcées*.)

Thus, at the same time that Spinola was bringing you books and plays, and giving you the benefit of his agreeable conversation for an hour or more every day, he was making love systematically to Alida Wynkoop with the hope of marrying her!

Who knows, you may even have served to sharpen the jealous caprices—if she had any—of this possible *fiancée*.

Spinola kept you, as it were, for a rainy day, in case of need, or, as they say in Italian, “as a pear for thirst.” In this way, if Alida Wynkoop, he argued, were suddenly to turn the cold shoulder upon him, his position would be less painful. He would appear in a favor-

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able light before the world if he could be seen at once by your side. Had he compromised you but ever so slightly there is more than one person who would have concluded that it was Miss Wynkoop who had been jilted. Such self-sacrifice on the part of our young hero would have seemed meritorious to the uninitiated. As a matter of fact the sacrifice on this occasion would have been of your reputation. People would have very naturally supposed that if Spinola gave up his chances of marrying for the moment, it was because you had made promises to him for the future!

Now, so your friends have informed me, what Spinola dreaded most has come to pass. Miss Wynkoop, it is true, invited him to her house party, but it was with the intention of presenting him to the *fiancé* she has just chosen. Spinola was informed duly of the little plan in preparation for Miss W.'s especial pleasure. Forewarned is forearmed. As though he were quite skilled in the course of conduct to pursue under these circumstances,

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he proceeded to write his young friend that he had heard the good news of the engagement, and was glad to be among the first to congratulate her.

Meanwhile he was playing the rôle of ever-faithful to you. He led you to suppose that he was giving up an amusing visit to a country house—and country hostess—in order to remain at the beck and call of his dearest friend, and to have news of her twice a day!

Jane, dear, don't be angry at my comparison. It might be offensive on Mortimer's tongue, it can't be on mine. Well, then, Spinola took you as a sort of stage-horse. To-day he is stationed at Washington, to-morrow he will be at Constantinople. In the interim he doesn't want to be bored. He is not overscrupulous as to the object upon which he fixes for paying his attentions. If she passes unscathed near the flames, as you have, all well and good. If not, then so much the worse for her. He can retire at any time under the pretext of work, his professional

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duty, and so on. His honor, if not that of others, is unharmed by any of the adventures upon which he embarks.

You were, let me add, too good to be taken as a pastime. And Mortimer is worth more than Spinola. You agree with me already. In six months you will laugh at the idea that you could have once written to ask whether a woman can love two men at once.

You love but one. If that one can be the same all your life, then you will say to yourself that you no longer need the advice of your poor old friend! Amen.

P. S. May I tell Mortimer that he can go and join you at Baltimore? My house is open to welcome you. I shall stay here and air the house; you have just escaped an attack of "Spinolitis"; an illness frequent, not very serious, and which has no relapses. But all the same a little change of climate will be salutary.

XIV

[*Telegram*]

Telegram just received. Mortimer leaves
to join you to-night. God bless you both.

(1)

THE END

MORTIMER LIBRARY,
NEW YORK.

WHERE LOVE CONQUERS.

The Reckoning.

By ROBERT W. CHAMBERS.

The author's intention is to treat, in a series of four or five romances, that part of the war for independence which particularly affected the great landed families of northern New York, the Johnsons, represented by Sir William, Sir John, Guy Johnson, and Colonel Claus; the notorious Butlers, father and son, the Schuylers, Van Rensselaers, and others.

The first romance of the series, *Cardigan*, was followed by the second, *The Maid-at-Arms*. The third, in order, is not completed. The fourth is the present volume.

As *Cardigan* pretended to portray life on the baronial estate of Sir William Johnson, the first uneasiness concerning the coming trouble, the first discordant note struck in the harmonious councils of the Long House, so, in *The Maid-at-Arms*, which followed in order, the author attempted to paint a patroon family disturbed by the approaching rumble of battle. That romance dealt with the first serious split in the Iroquois Confederacy; it showed the Long House shattered though not fallen; the demoralization and final flight of the great landed families who remained loyal to the British Crown; and it struck the key-note to the future attitude of the Iroquois toward the patriots of the frontier—revenge for their losses at the battle of Oriskany—and ended with the march of the militia and continental troops on Saratoga.

The third romance, as yet incomplete and unpublished, deals with the war-path and those who followed it led by the landed gentry of Tryon County; and ends with the first solid blow delivered at the Long House, and the terrible punishment of the Great Confederacy.

The present romance, the fourth in chronological order, picks up the thread at that point.

The author is not conscious of having taken any liberties with history in preparing a framework of facts for a mantle of romance.

ROBERT W. CHAMBERS.

NEW YORK, May 26, 1904.

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY, NEW YORK.

WORKS OF ROBERT W. CHAMBERS.

IOLE

Colored inlay on the cover, decorative borders, head-pieces, thumb-nail sketches, and tail-pieces. Frontispiece and three full-page illustrations. 12mo. Ornamental Cloth, \$1.25.

Does anybody remember the opera of *The Inca*, and that heart-breaking episode where the Court Undertaker, in a morbid desire to increase his professional skill, deliberately accomplishes the destruction of his middle-aged relatives in order to inter them for the sake of practice?

If I recollect, his dismal confession runs something like this:

"It was in bleak November
When I slew them, I remember,
As I caught them unawares
Drinking tea in rocking-chairs."

And so he talked them to death, the subject being "What Really Is Art?" Afterward he was sorry—

"The squeak of a door,
The creak of a floor,
My horror and fears enhance;
And I wake with a scream
As I hear in my dream
The shrieks of my maiden aunts!"

Now it is a very dreadful thing to suggest that those highly respectable pseudo-spinsters, the Sister Arts, supposedly cozily immune in their polygamous chastity (for every suitor for favor is popularly expected to be wedded to his particular art)—I repeat, it is very dreadful to suggest that these impeccable old ladies are in danger of being talked to death.

But the talkers are talking and Art Nouveau rockers are rocking, and the trousers of the prophet are patched with stained glass, and it is a day of dinkiness and of thumbs.

Let us find comfort in the ancient proverb: "Art talked to death shall rise again." Let us also recollect that "Dinky is as dinky does;" that "All is not Shaw that Bernards;" that "Better Yeates than Clever;" that words are so inexpensive that there is no moral crime in robbing Henry to pay James.

Firmly believing all this, abjuring all atom-pickers, slab furniture, and woodchuck literature—save only the immortal verse:

"And there the wooden-chuck doth tread;
While from the oak trees' tops
The red, red squirrel on the head
The frequent acorn drops."

Abjuring, as I say, dinkiness in all its forms, we may still hope that those cleanly and respectable spinsters, the Sister Arts, will continue throughout the ages, rocking and drinking tea unterrified by the million-tongued clamor in the back yard and below stairs, where thumb and forefinger continue the question demanded by intellectual exhaustion:

"L'arr! Keeker say l'arr!"

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY, PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK.

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"'The Carlyles' is full of diversified color and interesting suggestions."—*New York Sun*.

"There is plenty of stirring action incident to the closing days of the rebellion, and the romances and adventures of the principal characters are of the most engrossing kind."—*Boston Herald*.

"Such stories as 'The Carlyles' must be beneficial, especially coming from the pen of a Virginian. While Mrs. Harrison has depicted the attitude of Southerners toward soldiers of the conquering North with the utmost fidelity, she has chosen human beings with a sense of justice and an appreciation of the difference between the short-comings of an army and the kindness of its individual soldiers."—*Louisville Courier-Journal*.

"Varied, abundant action, charming word picture, good character delineation, and a double love thread keep the reader's attention from straying."—*Chicago Record-Herald*.

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY, NEW YORK.

